JAPAN AND CHINA

THEIR HISTORY ARTS AND LITERATURE

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NUMBER

HYDERABAD (DN)

A CORNER OF A JAPANESE GARDEN.

JAPAN

Its History Arts and Literature

BY

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EDITOR OF "THE JAPAN MAIL" AND SPECIAL JAPAN CORRESPONDENT OF "THE TIMES"

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CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER I

JAPANESE PICTORIAL ART 1

CHAPTER II

JAPANESE APPLIED ART 69

CHAPTER III

JAPANESE APPLIED ART (*Continued*) 106

CHAPTER IV

BRONZE-CASTING, ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE AND DECORATION, ETC. 135

CHAPTER V

VARIOUS APPLICATIONS OF ART 162

CHAPTER VI

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE 205

CHAPTER VII

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE (*Continued*) . . . 249

CHAPTER VIII

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE (*Continued*) . . . 295

CHAPTER IX

SPECIAL SUBJECTS 312

APPENDIX 367

INDEX 379

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
A Corner of a Japanese Garden	*Frontispiece*
The Goddess of Fortune (Benzaiten)	8
Figures of Samurai	16
Rihaku Looking at a Waterfall	24
Heron	32
Group of Monkeys	36
Moonlight on the Snow	40
Quail and Rice	44
Flower Study	48
Sunrise on the Seashore	52
Carp in Stream	56
Landscape in Semi-Japanese Style	60
Modern Semi-Japanese School	64
Wooden Statue of the Deity of Art	72
Wooden Statue of Manjusri	88
Bronze Statue of the Moon Deva (Gekko)	96
Clay Figures	112
Wooden Statue of Vimala-Kirti	120
Bronze Gong	128
Statue (One of the Deva Kings)	144
Image (One of the Twelve Devas)	160

ILLUSTRATIONS

Page

One of the Deva Kings Guarding the Gate at the Temple Todai-ji 176

Eleven-faced Kwannon in Shrine; Fourteenth Century . 192

Netsuke 208

Wooden Brackets 224

Modern Ivory Statuettes 240

Ivory Inro 264

Menuki . . . Knife Handles . . . Rings and Tips . 280

Sword Guards. Plate I. 304

Sword Guards. Plate II. 320

JAPAN

ITS HISTORY ARTS AND LITERATURE

Chapter I

JAPANESE PICTORIAL ART

JAPAN'S victorious war with the neighbouring Empire in 1894–1895 showed the world that she was something more than a kind of pretty toy country, where the trivial tourist might enjoy the sight of people using paper pocket-handkerchiefs, feeding themselves with two sticks instead of a knife and fork, and living in houses without windows; and where the dilettante might find art treasures as charming as they were novel. Up to the eve of that war, the average European or American bestowed upon her no more attention than he accorded to some new phenomenon in the world of physics. A sentiment of curiosity, perhaps academical, perhaps ethnographical, but certainly languid, was awakened in his breast by the intelligence that an Oriental nation had undertaken not merely to discard its Oriental garments, but also to prove that they had always been a misfit. He watched the result much as he would have watched the experiments of a horticulturist seeking

to make peonies blow on a briar stem. In the field of art, however, his estimate of her capacities was different. He could not hide from himself that the revival of decorative art in Europe had been stimulated and guided by the study of first-class Japanese work, and that types of the highest æsthetic quality were to be found among Japanese *chefs d'œuvre*.

But what, after all, was Japanese art? Must it be regarded as simply decorative, or might it also be considered representative? That question pressed for an answer. People were unwilling to admit that a new star of the first magnitude had really risen on the horizon. They found something slight, something trivial, in Japanese pictures; a lack of emotion-inspiring motive; an absence of massiveness and breadth of treatment. It could easily be detected that the range of the painter's fancy was limited by a logical canon; that he forbade himself to transfer to his canvas any scene too extensive to be revealed by a single glance of the eye; that, in short, just as Japanese poetry never rose to the dignity of an ode but stopped short at a couplet, so Japanese pictures, instead of telling a complete story, merely suggested an incident. But that they displayed remarkable directness of method and strength of line; that the artist knew exactly what he wanted to draw and drew it with unerring fidelity and force; that the very outlines of the picture were in themselves a picture, and that the whole was pervaded by an atmosphere of tenderness and grace indicating a refined conception of everything beautiful in nature,—these were facts that forced themselves upon the attention of every close observer.

What, then, was the fundamental difference between this art and the art of the Occident? It seems a little

strange that the question should have remained unanswered for any length of time, inasmuch as a visit to a Japanese dwelling should have immediately suggested the reply. A Japanese picture is not painted simply for the sake of representative effect; it is part of a decorative scheme. There is no such thing in Japan as a picture gallery — a place whither people repair to look at pictures merely for the sake of pictures. The painter, so far as the ultimate uses of his work were concerned, ranked with the joiner, the plasterer, and the paper-hanger. His object was to beautify some part of the domestic interior. Originally the scope of his art was chiefly religious, but from the fifteenth century he may be said to have had three fields for the exercise of his genius: first, screens — from the broad-faced *tsuitate* that stood in the vestibule, with its boldly limned design such as a passing glance could appreciate, to the little two-leaved *biyobu* that formed an elbow of glowing tints and delicate fancies to embrace the pillow of the lady of the household; second, the panels of the sliding doors that separated rooms, or gave access to cupboards and quaintly contrived nooks; and, third, the alcove recess, where a hanging picture occupied the background with a censer, supported on a stand, in the middle distance, and a flower vase and an *okimono* [1] balancing each other in the foreground. Screens and door-panels, whatever their position or use, do not rise above the rank of articles of furniture: the designs applied to them must be purely decorative. But a picture hanging in an alcove seems at first sight to occupy a higher place and to offer a worthier opportunity for the display of representative art. In the Japanese system, however, the

[1] See Appendix, note 1.

alcove picture was primarily an alcove ornament. It had to take its place in a decorative scheme; had to harmonise with, not to eclipse, its surroundings; to accompany them, not to stand apart from them. The European or American hangs his pictures with regard simply to the wall space at his disposal and the direction of his lights. The picture is the sole object of his consideration; everything is sacrificed to it. He builds a special gallery for the exhibition of these treasures, if he is so fortunate as to possess a sufficient number, and he takes care that nothing in the gallery shall clash with its prime purpose, the display of the paintings. But a Japanese never shows more than one picture, or one set of pictures, at a time. If he has a large collection, he keeps them in his fire-proof storeroom, and gives to each in turn a temporary place in the alcove recess. Hanging there, a picture must satisfy the same canon as the objects associated with it: the eye must find equal pleasure in regarding it from every part of the room. Thus it is at once radically differentiated from the picture of Occidental art, the picture which must be seen from one special point of view and with light coming from one fixed direction.

Thus, also, linear perspective and cast shadows are necessarily excluded. Vanishing points, horizon lines, and such things mean that only one aspect of a picture is delightful; every other, painful. The Japanese artist perceived these things intuitively. It has been said of him reproachfully that he remained perpetually ignorant of perspective, and that he never discovered the theory of shadows. Certainly it is true that his knowledge of linear perspective continued to be very imperfect until modern times; but

it is also true that he always had a full understanding of aerial perspective; and if it were possible to imagine for a moment that the presence of cast shadows escaped the observation of one so deeply versed in every other detail of nature's portraiture, the delusion would at once be dispelled by examining his representations of fishes, where each scale is accompanied by its due shadow, and of foliage where leaves and branches occupy their proper places in an accurate scheme of light and shade. But the fact is that he never allowed his artistic fancy to obscure the logic of his purpose. His prime function was to ornament a flat surface, and he recognised that scenes demanding the realistic effects produced by relief and differences of plane are entirely discordant with such a function. He considered that his picture, whether it represented landscape, seascape, figures, flowers, birds, or what not, was intended to produce, not an illusion, but a harmony. Very seldom did he make the mistake of pasting what people of the Occident call "pictures" upon walls, screens, doors, or ceilings. Aerial perspective and foreshortening were permissible, and he used them with admirable skill: linear perspective and cast shadows he carefully eschewed.

It is easy to conceive that a tendency to what the West calls "suggestion" would be developed by such conditions. A temple would be represented by the *torii* that spans its avenue of approach; a town, by two or three roof-ridges emerging from mist; a tree, by one bough; a river, by a sinuous stroke; the sea, by the curves of a few wave-crests. Some have said of Japanese art that it is essentially impressionist. That is true, with the limitation that the impressions produced are those of facts, not of fancies;

of realities, not of ideas. Appreciation depends on education. Occidentals have learned to esteem painting for the sake of its beauty independently of its environment; the Japanese esteems it for its beauty in subordination to its environment. As to which is the greater effort of art, need there be any discussion? The purpose of the artist in each case is radically different. When he steps out of the comparatively narrow limits imposed by decorative canons; when, by the aid of cast shadows, perspective, and a delicate gradation of "values," he shows his public not merely an exquisite scene from nature, but also the poetical aspects that it presents to his own refined imagination, is not the spectator in the presence of one of the greatest achievements of genius, one of the noblest results of intellectual development? Still the merits of the decorative system also must be recognised; above all, such a system as the Japanese elaborated by centuries upon centuries of subtle effort. The "picture" obliges its viewer to isolate himself from his surroundings; to gaze through an open window without any consciousness of the room in which he is standing. The decorative painting invites him to view it as part of a whole, and to value it in proportion as it enhances its environment. Japanese art may be said to end where European art begins, — that is to say, European art subsequent to the sixteenth century.

This broad difference recognised, it is found that the Japanese artist accepted every suggestion offered by nature within the limits of its adaptability. His observation was extraordinarily keen, perhaps because he never assisted it artificially. He knew nothing of animate models. It would have appeared quite irra-

tional in his eyes to take a drawing of a *danseuse* from a posed girl, or to gather the idea of a bird in flight from a stuffed specimen with extended wings. "Objects at rest can never seem to be in motion," would have been his thought, "however their limbs be disposed or their muscles stretched." Therefore he painted moving objects according to his impression of the appearance they presented when in motion, and it was such a correct impression that his birds seemed to be flying out of the canvas, his dancers moving across the field of vision. In that feature of his art he found few equals and no superiors. The nude had no place in his repertoire of subjects. To hang a drawing of an undraped female in an alcove would have been judged as intolerable a violation of propriety as though a host should discard his clothes to receive a visitor. How much the Japanese lost, how much they gained, by excluding such subjects from their pictorial art, need not be discussed here. But reference may be made to the fact that the question is now actively agitating public opinion. Two or three painters, disciples of the Occidental School, have invited a conclusive decision by exhibiting pictures of the nude, and the nation hesitates whether to welcome or to taboo the innovation. It must be confessed that the challenge has been very rudely issued. The paintings upon which judgment is to be based have hitherto been entirely without the atmosphere of refinement and idealism which alone can veil the gross features of such representations. Were the circumstances ever so favourable, however, it is probable that more than one generation must come and go before Japanese taste can be even partially reconciled to pictures of the nude. At all events, there has

been nothing of the kind as yet in the country's art. It is an easily understood corollary that anatomical studies never occupied the artist's attention. That defect in his education often forces itself painfully upon observation, especially in his delineation of hands and feet. Perhaps for the same reason he fails signally in his attempt to draw animals, — horses, oxen, foxes, tigers, elephants, wolves, dogs, and so forth. Strange that the accuracy of his observation, conspicuous in other things, should be so markedly defective in this field. He can limn a fish, a bird, an insect, or even a fluffy little puppy-dog to perfection, but when he has to trace outlines that depend for their correctness on knowledge of the bony and muscular structures beneath, he errs perpetually. Directness of method and power of line are among his chief merits. As to the latter quality, its genesis may be attributed to the use of the ideographic script. The training that every Japanese child receives from a tender age in tracing ideographs, educates a brush-using facility which has become in some degree hereditary. It may be laid down as axiomatic that an intimate relationship exists between Japanese calligraphy and Japanese painting, and that the Japanese eye detects in brush strokes an æsthetic beauty too subtle to appeal to men living outside the ideographic pale. Touch, as has been well said by a great connoisseur of Japanese pictorial art, is not by any means the most important quality in a picture, but it nevertheless contributes largely to the flavour and vitality of an artist's work. When a Japanese speaks of "power of pen" (*hitsu-riyoku*), there presents itself to his mind a combination of delicate grace, infallible accuracy, and unostentatious verve which every intelligent ob-

Painting, eighth century, by unknown artist.

THE GODDESS OF FORTUNE (BENZAITEN).

Her right hand shown in the distorted shape called *abhayanda;* her left hand holding the wishing jewel.

From the Temple of Yakushi-ji. (See page 26.)



server is expected to recognise. He himself, if he has any pretensions to be a connoisseur, is familiar with sixteen different styles of touch for painting scenery, thirty-six for painting foliage, and nineteen for painting drapery, which constitute the classics of the brush, each having its own distinctive name and clearly established characteristics. To Western intelligence these facts suggest mannerism and formalism. Such analytical elaboration seems incongruous with the spirit of true art. Yet tricks of brush-manipulation are not allowed to impair the expression of the pictorial motive in Japan. These peculiar strokes, when traced by the hand of a master, do not obtrude themselves at the expense of congruity. They may, of course, be exaggerated so as to become startlingly obtrusive. Hokusai's work often shows that fault. His use of the "swift-wave," otherwise called the "holly-leaf," style in drawing drapery sometimes degenerates into an impertinent mannerism, whereas outlines of the same class appear natural and appropriate when traced by the brush of Utanosuke or Shiutoku. But the point to which attention may be directed is not the merits or defects of such styles for pictorial purposes so much as the fact of their accurate differentiation and faithful employment by Japanese experts. The observer is thus carried into a field practically unexplored by European and American artists who associate with the best line drawing no qualities other than strength, delicacy, and directness.

Passing from the calligraphic training of the hand to the hand itself, it is seen that nature has endowed the Japanese people with hands singularly supple and sensitive. Manual dexterity ought to characterise

such a nation. Thus, if they are found wielding the artist's brush with admirable strength and accuracy, one may look also to find them revelling in microscopic elaboration of detail; if at one time they suggest a whole repertoire of facts by a few bold touches, at another they may be expected to lavish a whole mine of minutiæ upon the working out of a few facts. And so indeed it is. Side by side with sketches which astonish by the suggestive wealth of half-a-dozen salient brush-strokes, pictures are seen which almost eclipse the illuminated missals of mediæval times, so conscientious is their detail, so profuse their elaboration. What perplexes many students, too, is that the same brush dashes out at one moment a design of colossal boldness, and devotes itself, the next, to work of marvellous detail. By way of illustration, reference may be made to Nobuzane and Hokusai, names very familiar to Western connoisseurs. If the average Japanese dilettante be asked to describe Nobuzane's characteristics, he will reply, delicacy of touch, illimitable minutiæ of detail, and exquisite harmony of tints. Yet it is a fact established beyond query that the genuine works of Nobuzane show him to have been a master possessing noble vigour, and place him incomparably above the illuminator of a missal or the painter of a peacock's tail. So, too, if the average American or European collector had to define Hokusai's style, he would speak of bold outlines, of wonderfully realistic figures, and of a wealth of humorous conception. Yet there exist pictures by Hokusai which rank with the finest etching in the matter of minutiæ, and with the most delicate engraving in the matter of mechanical accuracy of line. It is scarcely possible to conceive that the laborious

limner of such works can be identical with the daring artist of the *Man-gwa* (ten thousand sketches) or the poetical painter of the Hundred Views of Fujiyama. Some may say, perhaps, that the Japanese hand is a product of the ideograph; that the manipulation of the brush through long centuries has modified the shape of the fingers and caused a special adjustment of muscles. That is a question beyond the range of art discussion. It has concern for those that advocate the displacement of the ideographic script by the Roman alphabet, but here it will suffice to notice the three factors that belong to this context, factors which must be recognised by every one desiring to appreciate Japanese art, namely, a hand singularly supple and sensitive, a brush manipulated with skill and strength beyond any Occidental standard, and a hereditary perception of quality in touch with which only an ideographist can fully sympathise.

The brush (*fude*) itself is not an ideal contrivance for artistic purposes. It is a stiff-haired pencil which, in ordinary hands, presents a difficulty to be overcome rather than a helpful instrument. This comment may be appropriately extended to the general question of the Japanese artist's materials. It is said that unless one has actually worked with those materials, the difficulty of manipulating them cannot be realised. The rapidly absorptive quality of the paper, as prepared for use, necessitates damping of the whole surface in order to apply a wash, and, of course, after the damping process has been repeated three or four times, the sizing of the paper perishes, or the preparation of the silk disappears, if silk is employed. Moreover, the colour first applied is assimilated so largely that unless it be opaque there is little possi-

bility of working over it even when dry: it seems to swallow up all shades which are not very much darker than itself. Practically, therefore, one wash is the limit. On the dry paper, too, the work has to be done quickly and with sweeping, finished strokes; if the brush leaves the paper, there is a hard line without recourse. Correction is practically impossible, and the result of every brushful of colour must, therefore, be foreseen to a nicety. On the other hand, the paper and silk — especially the latter — of the Japanese artist repay these technical difficulties by the delicate softness that they impart to a colour, and, in the case of silk, exceptional effects are produced by applying the pigments at the back of the drawing so that they show through the material.

There is another feature of Japanese pictorial art which, though apparently little appreciated by Western connoisseurs, must really be regarded as fundamental. It is that the position of the painter with regard to his picture influences the whole character of his line work. Instead of standing upright before his easel so that the axis of his lines is either on the mahl-stick or at his shoulder, he kneels on the floor with his paper or silk beneath him so that the axis of his sweep is the lower part of the leg, and the whole body from the knee upward becomes the arm with which the lines and curves are produced. Whether this mechanical difference constitutes an advantage or a disadvantage is a difficult question. But, as a very astute critic has remarked, "Japanese drawing so depends on its lines, its character is so wrapped up in them, that if the lines changed their sweep and flow, that character would be lost."

It will be easily inferred from what has thus far

been written that the mannerisms of Japanese art are numerous. The decorative limits within which it is for the most part confined render such a result almost inevitable. In the course of time certain tricks of delineation have received the cachet of great masters and been recognised as the *ne plus ultra* of forceful suggestiveness. A fatal temptation to learn these tricks without attempting to acquire the spirit that suggested them besets the average student. It is so comfortable, so reassuring, to know that waves, bamboos, clouds, flowing water, hair, rock, and a multitude of other objects may be depicted by lines, curves, and washes combined and arranged in ways capable of being memorised as accurately as an ideograph or a syllabary. The result is painful ease of reproduction. The observer is lost in admiration of the directness and facility of a Japanese artist who seats himself among a group of onlookers and paints a dozen pictures in an hour, each presenting some points of excellence. But it may very well happen that a year or two later the same observer is invited to attend a *séance* where the same artist performs the same *tour de force* by producing exactly the same pictures in the same time. Of course this criticism applies to the rank and file alone of the profession, — the men who, being without originality of conception, are obliged to substitute skill of pencil, and who find in the mere processes of the great masters a sufficient equipment for the purposes of every-day art. Unfortunately such mechanists of the brush have abounded in every era. Their skill as copyists constitutes a barrier to foreign appreciation of true Japanese art. How many collectors or connoisseurs in Europe or America have had an opportunity of examining genuine works of

great Japanese painters? How many Japanese in Japan have had such an opportunity? Their combined number might probably be counted on the fingers of two hands. Copies, imitations, forgeries, they have seen in abundance, but to authenticated originals they have had little access.

What has already been said about picture galleries may be recalled here. In Europe and America one can visit collections, private or public, where examples of all the celebrated artists of France, Italy, Germany, and so on are displayed. There is nothing of the kind in Japan, and there never has been anything of the kind. Japanese pictures are hidden away among the heirlooms of temples or in the storehouses of noblemen and wealthy merchants. They are practically inaccessible. A not uninterested or unintelligent observer may have lived for years in Japan before the trivial estimate he has formed of Sesshiu, of Shiubun, of Motonobu, of Chō Densu, of Tanyu, or of the other masters, is rudely disturbed some morning by a revelation that startles him into a new belief. He may never have that revelation at all. The chances are a thousand to one that it never comes to a resident of a foreign settlement. Certainly some of the European authors whom the world accepts as true exponents of Japanese art have never been introduced to genuine representatives of many of the historical schools that they describe. They have utilized their limited opportunities with diligence and ability, but it was impossible that they could speak discerningly of what they had not seen, or had viewed only through copies scarcely ranking above caricatures. In this reflection is to be found, perhaps, a sufficient explanation of the great divergence between views

submitted to the public on the subject of Japanese art. Chamberlain can scarcely conceal his contempt for it: he finds that it "stops at the small, the petty, the isolated, the vignette," and that the chief lesson it has taught the world is "the charm of irregularity." Fenollosa, on the other hand, talks of Motonobu as "scaling the heavens and battling with Titans;" of "the depth and intensity which startle us like the voices of the Gods from the mellow-toned sheets of Shiubun, Noami, Jasoku, and Masanobu;" of "the draught of immortality that all late artists have sought to drink from the well of Sesshiu's irrepressible vigour," and of "Yeitoku, whose heart burns with the internal fire lit from the torch of the Sung genius." It is impossible that two men of very much more than average intelligence can speak of the same thing with voices so dissentient. The truth is that their verdicts are based on different evidence.

The remarks made above with reference to the decorative limitations of Japanese art apply with clearer truth to secular than to religious paintings. In the latter field work is occasionally found that does not suggest any consideration for the plane of its display or the nature of its environment. Some of the earliest masters are known chiefly, if not entirely, by the pictures that they painted for Buddhist temples or Buddhist priests, and these pictures would deservedly rank high in any country. They show loftiness of conception, massiveness of treatment, and vigour of method that rival the achievements of the Italian mediæval celebrities. Yet they cannot be cited as witnesses against the general theory enunciated above, for they are without either linear perspective or cast shadows.

Japanese pictorial art is permeated with Chinese affinities. The one is indeed the child of the other, and traces of this close relationship are nearly always present in greater or less degree. To discern the marks of consanguinity is, however, a difficult task at times, not because of their actual obscurity, but because means of identification are defective. Imperfect as is the Occident's knowledge of Japanese pictorial art, it compares favourably with its knowledge of Chinese. Of the latter virtually nothing was known by Western connoisseurs until they were introduced to it through the medium of the former; for, strange as the fact may seem, fine Chinese pictures are very much more accessible in Japan than in China. Japan is perfectly frank in acknowledging the debt she owes to the neighbouring empire. She does not pretend for a moment that her own painters have ever surpassed their models, the great masters of the *Tang*, the *Sung*, the *Yuan*, and the *Ming* dynasties, and she treasures the latter's works with all the reverent love that an Occidental virtuoso feels for the gems of Rubens, of Angelo, of Titian, or of Holbein. It may, indeed, be fairly claimed for the Japanese that in some branches of painting their modifications deserve to be regarded as efforts of original genius, and that, speaking generally, their work is superior to that of the Chinese in tenderness, grace, and, above all, humour. But, for the rest, they sit at China's feet. Korea should also be included among their masters, for there is evidence that Korean influence preceded Chinese. But the earliest really great Japanese artist — Kose no Kanaoka — is an unalloyed product of Chinese inspiration, and stands at the crest of a flood of Chinese influence that

FIGURES OF SAMURAI.

By Iwasa Matahei. End of sixteenth century. (See page 45.)

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inundated his country in the eighth and ninth centuries. Two hundred years before his time (850–880 A.D.), Buddhism had become established in Japan, and the best efforts of her artists were soon devoted to the service of the new faith. Thus the most ancient painting now extant is a mural decoration in the temple Horiu-ji, near Nara, which is believed to date from the opening years of the seventh century, and it may be stated at once that in no country has the spirit of art been more closely connected with religion than in Japan. Not merely did painting, architecture, and sculpture make their entry in the train of the Indian creed, but close study shows that the development of the various sects may often be traced by their influence on the artistic features of their respective epochs. To Buddhism also are due the Grecian affinities distinctly traceable in Japanese art, for the conquests of Alexander brought Grecian civilisation to northern India, whence Buddhism set out for China, Korea, and Japan.

Concerning the history of Japanese art, the best authorities refer its genesis to the reign of the Empress Suiko (563–567 A.D.), when Chinese court fashions, literature, and etiquette were introduced, and with them came applied art for decorating the Buddhist temples then beginning to be built. The accuracy of the date need not be insisted upon, for the evidence is traditional; but certainly the seventh century bequeathed to posterity a few specimens which show that the casting, and chiselling of metal, and the manufacture of lacquer were already practised with considerable skill; that fine examples of embroidery had been imported from China, if not produced in Japan, and that painting, though still

crude and elementary, had made some progress. A great deal of ingenuity and close research have been devoted to tracing fine lines of division between the periods of Japanese development in those early days, but the resulting differentiation is too subtle to be practical. The problem of real interest is to separate foreign inspiration from native originality; to determine whether this art, which has so greatly pleased the world in modern times, is a mere by-product of inspiration emanating in the first place from Greece, and becoming more and more deflected from the line of identity as it passed through the refracting media of Indian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese assimilations, or whether any part of it may be regarded as the unmixed offspring of Japanese genius. With that object in view it would certainly be helpful to trace the record back to its very alphabet. But unfortunately the materials are not sufficient for accurate analysis. If the most profound students take the latter half of the sixth century as the opening era, it is not because they believe the preceding cycles to have been entirely barren, but because the spread of Buddhism at that time supplied the first elevating impulse, as well as the first means of preserving and transmitting the art products of the time. There is no apparent possibility of determining, however, whether the scanty specimens transmitted from the sixth century and the first half of the seventh were the work of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean hands. Not until the end of the seventh century does solid ground present itself, and Japan is then found in such close contact with China that a full tide of civilisation flowed from the latter to the shores of her neighbour,— civilisation which, so far as its artistic side is concerned, was

permeated with Indo-Grecian influences. The materials for study now cease to be few and apocryphal. A very considerable number of authenticated sculptures, several paintings, and a remarkably full assemblage of examples of applied art, illustrate the culture of the epoch.

To this time belongs the celebrated collection preserved in an imperial storehouse called the Shoso-in at Nara. Nara was the capital of Japan and the residence of the Imperial Court from 709 to 784 A.D. During that interval the priests of Horiuji, to which temple the Shoso-in is attached, received from the Palace various memorial relics, so that the Shoso-in collection ultimately comprised specimens of the ornaments, utensils, robes, musical instruments, etc., used by three Emperors and three Empresses. This collection, supplemented by temple treasures, brings the student into intimate touch with the civilisation of the era. He can speak of it confidently. As to sculpture, the point of excellence to which it had been carried is attested by several statues which form part of the Nara temple relics. No critic can deny to these works a high place in any scale of artistic conception and technical skill. Tradition assigns some of the best of them to anonymous Chinese or Korean sculptors. But no such sculptures have hitherto been found in either Korea or China. Here is presented one of the difficulties besetting every effort to decipher the alphabet of Japanese art. Working in the service of religion, the Japanese artist buried his individuality in his purpose; and, on the other hand, since Korea originally transmitted Buddhism to Japan, and China, during several centuries, remained the sole source of its exegesis, the priests

and propagandists of the faith were naturally disposed to claim the *cachet* of Korean and Chinese artists for the decoration and equipment of sacred edifices. The artist effaced himself; his employers ignored him, and posterity was probably betrayed into the error of attributing to foreign masters much that Japan had a just title to call her own. The tendency of modern research is to throw doubt upon the foreign provenance of several important works hitherto attributed to Chinese or Korean artists. Men that could conceive and construct the colossal bronze figure of Lochana Buddha at Nara, and the numerous images preserved in the temple there, cannot have experienced much necessity to employ Chinese or Korean hands. Nevertheless, though the glyptic art, the lacquerer's art, and the inlayer's art unquestionably attained a high stage of development in this epoch, the pictorial art remained in a secondary place and a careful examination of the Shoso-in collection shows that even in the field of decorative art the features which constitute the chief charm, as well as the specialty, of Japanese genius in later ages had not yet been evolved. Without exception the decoration seen in the Shoso-in specimens is geometrically distributed. There is no evidence that the Japanese had yet begun to fathom the secret of natural proportion, or to study the lesson they afterwards acquired so perfectly, namely, that to conceal, while preserving, the geometrical relations of part to part, to obtain equilibrium while apparently despising equipoise, is the fundamental axiom of graceful symmetry. But as sculptors they unquestionably stand at the head of Far-Eastern artists, and although the degree of their supremacy varied from age to age, the fact could never be questioned. What

has been said above of painting applies with equal truth to sculpture. In both alike the impress of Japanese genius shows itself chiefly in tenderness, grace, and, above all, humour. It is doubtful whether the Japanese pictorial artist ever scaled the heights on which the greatest of the Chinese masters stood. It is virtually certain that the converse is true in the case of sculpture. But these are mere differences of degree. Not until the characteristics of humour, tenderness, and grace are considered does the distinction become radical.

A few words may be said here about Chinese art, since it occupies such an important place in the vista of the retrospect. While accepting the indisputable truth that the art of Japan in its greatest phases is but a reflection of the art of China — a reflection frequently vying with its original in vigour and vitality, but more frequently displaying the weaknesses incidental to imitations in general — it is necessary to avoid the inference that the native genius of the Chinese artist was wholly responsible for his successes. The fact is that in both countries pictorial art drew its best inspiration from the same fount, Buddhism, and in both derived some of its most striking technical features from the same source, calligraphy. The Chinese doubtless had pictures long before the days of Apelles and Zeuxis, but their artists failed to attract any national attention until Buddhism, coming in the third century of the Christian era, brought to them Græco-Indian suggestions which soon raised to the dignity of an art what had hitherto been nothing more than a branch of calligraphy. By a slow process of evolution this reformed art gradually attained, in the eighth century, a culminating point at which stands the figure

of Wu Tao-tsz.[1] Speaking broadly, the painters of his epoch — the Tang Dynasty (618–907 A.D.) — are believed to be the most powerful and original their country has produced, but it is difficult to determine how much that verdict owes to Oriental reverence for the antique. If the works of Wu Tao-tsz, Wong Wei (Japanese O-i), and Han Kan (Japanese Kan-Kan) served as splendid models to the first Japanese painters of note, — Kose no Kanaoka and his immediate successors,— the pictures of the Sung (960–1205 A.D.) masters[2] were even more esteemed and copied by subsequent Japanese artists, and continuously in later eras[3] the influence of the various Chinese schools made itself felt in the neighbouring empire. Turning to the general characteristics of the art, the first point to be noted is that strength, directness, decision, and delicacy of stroke ranked above all other qualities. Outlines were frequently traced, the fact that they do not exist in nature being deliberately ignored. Doubtless for the same reason, accuracy of drawing was often sacrificed to conventionalised beauties of curve and contour, and nature's effects were translated into the language of decorative mannerisms. Linear perspective was either absent altogether or present in a form that violated European canons. Cast shadows did not appear. Colours were used very sparingly in the earlier eras, the best works being in black and white, pure monochrome, or pale tints relieved by an occasional touch of brighter hue. No subject was too trivial for representation, but if pictures were often produced which, so far as concerns the objects depicted, would rank only as

[1] See Appendix, note 2.
[2] See Appendix, note 3.
[3] See Appendix, note 4.

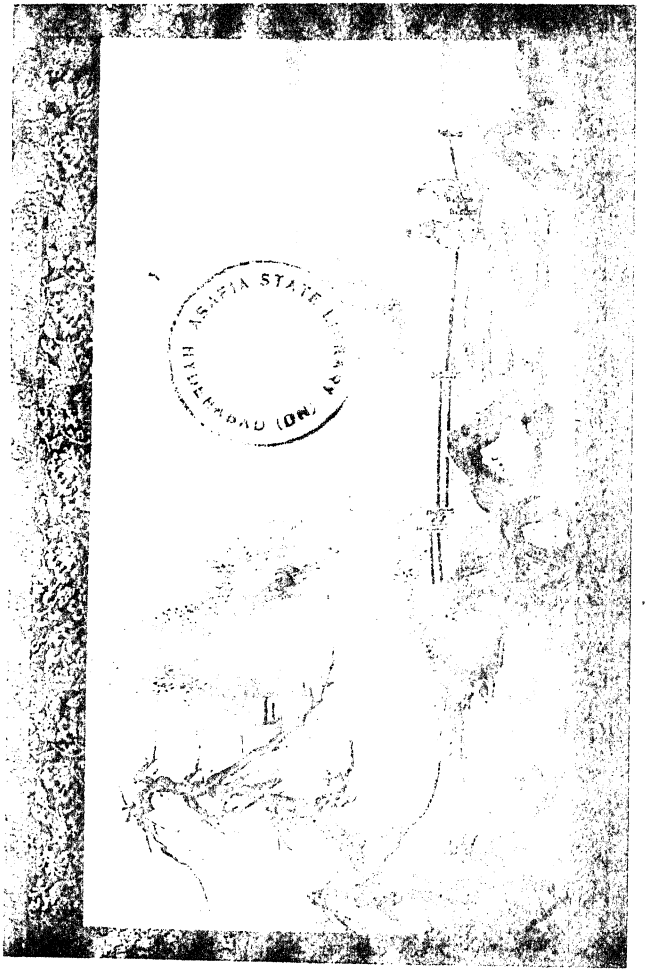
studies in the Occident, their narrowness of range was redeemed by remarkable subtlety of suggestion, and in the case of landscapes there was a really noble power of representing space and atmosphere. These remarks apply to secular rather than to religious paintings. In the latter, figure subjects predominate, and are treated not only with grandeur of conception but sometimes also with gorgeous wealth of decorative detail. The religious pictures of China and Japan are scarcely distinguishable. That is not strange when the identity of their motives and calligraphic methods is remembered, as well as the fact that in early days the Middle Kingdom stood towards the island empire in nearly the same relation as that occupied by Italy towards western Europe in mediæval and modern times. China was the bourne of the Japanese art student as well as of the Japanese litterateur, and to have sat at the feet of the Tang, Sung, or Yuan masters or philosophers was counted the highest possible education, whether æsthetic or scholastic. Representing the same subjects and inspired by the same devotional instincts, the Buddhist paintings of the two countries might well resemble each other to the point of identity. But it is strange to find among the secular works of Chinese artists exact prototypes of drawings that hang in the alcoves of thousands of Japanese houses, or form the decorative bases of innumerable Japanese objects of virtu. The perched hawks and roosting pigeons of Hwei Tsung; the swooping cranes and curling waves of Mih Yuen-chang; the beetling cliffs, dashing waterfalls, and rugged trees of Wu Tao-tsz; the ferocious dragons of Ch'en So-ung; the marvellously bold and vital sketches of Muh Ki, herons flying from the silk and

boughs waving on the paper; the vivid, crisp figure-subjects and the exquisitely delicate suggestions of still life and landscape by Li Lung-yen; the bamboos of Yuh Kien, every leaf drinking the sunny air and every spray instinct with lustiness; the eager, timid wild-fowl and wood-birds of Wan Chin and Wang Lieh-pan; the tender glimpses of scenic gems by Liu Liang and Lu Ki, like choice stanzas from a great poem — these and many another graceful conception, delineated with such fidelity to the first canon of art that a maximum of effect is produced with a minimum of visible effort, reveal the gallery where Japanese painters found their inspiration from century to century. Nothing has ever been written that sums up more happily and justly the facts now under discussion than the following extract from the work of that most accurate and discriminating student of Far-Eastern pictorial art, the late Dr. William Anderson: —

There is, perhaps, no section of art that has been so completely misapprehended in Europe as the pictorial art of China. For us the Chinese painter, past or present, is but a copyist who imitates with laborious and undiscriminating exactness whatever is laid before him, rejoices in the display of as many and as brilliant colours as his subject and remuneration will permit, and is original only in the creation of monstrosities. Nothing could be more contrary to the fact than this impression, if we omit from consideration the work executed for the foreign market,— work which every educated Chinese would disown. The old masters of the Middle Kingdom, who, as a body, united grandeur of conception with immense power of execution, cared little for elaboration of detail, and, except in Buddhist pictures, sought their best efforts in the simplicity of black and white, or in the most subdued of chromatic harmonies. Their art was

RIHAKU LOOKING AT A WATERFALL.

By Masanobu.


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HILLSBOROUGH (ON.)

defective, but not more so than that of Europe down to the end of the thirteenth century. Technically they did not go beyond the use of water colours, but in range and quality of pigments, in mechanical command of pencil, they had no reasons to fear comparison with their contemporaries. They had caught only a glimpse of the laws of chiaroscuro and perspective, but the want of science was counterpoised by more essential elements of artistic excellence. In motives they lacked neither variety nor elevation. As landscape painters they anticipated their European brethren by over a score of generations, and created transcripts of scenery that for breadth, atmosphere, and picturesque beauty can scarcely be surpassed. In their studies of the human figure, although their work was often rich in vigour and expression, they certainly fell immeasurably below the Greeks; but to counterbalance this defect no other artists, except those of Japan, have ever infused into the delineations of bird life one tithe of the vitality and action to be seen in the Chinese portraitures of the crow, the sparrow, the crane, and a hundred other varieties of the feathered race. In flowers the Chinese were less successful, owing to the absence of true chiaroscuro, but they were able to evolve a better picture out of a single spray of blossom than many a Western painter from all the treasures of a conservatory. If we endeavour to compare the pictorial art of China with that of Europe, we must carry ourselves back to the days when the former was in its greatness. Of the art that preceded the Tang dynasty we can say nothing. Like that of Polygnotus, Zeuxis, and Apelles, it is now represented only by traditions, which, if less precise in the former than in the latter case, are not less laudatory; but it may be asserted that nothing produced by the painters of Europe between the seventh and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era approaches within any measurable distance of the works of the great Chinese masters who gave lustre to the Tang, Sung, and Yuan dynasties, nor — to draw a little nearer to modern times — is there anything in the religious art of Cimabue that would not appear tame and graceless by the side of the Buddhist compositions of Wu Tao-tsz, Li Lung-yen, and Ngan Hwui. Down to the

end of the southern Empire in 1279 A.D., the Chinese were at the head of the world in the art of painting, as in many other things, and their nearest rivals were their own pupils, the Japanese.

The question to be now considered is what advantage Japan took of her access to the pictorial treasures of her neighbour. That she came into possession of these there can be no doubt, for by the priests whose enthusiastic zeal impelled them to make frequent visits to the source of Buddhism, the Middle Kingdom, sacred images and sacred paintings were constantly brought back,[1] to be placed in temples or presented to the Palace. Further, that already in the eighth century she possessed a gallery well stocked, whether by her own artists or with imported pictures, is attested by the registers of an ancient temple, To-dai-ji, where fifty painted screens are entered as having been among the sacred belongings at that time; by the treasure-book of the temple Saidai-ji, where there is mention of religious pictures of great size, — one having a height of 4–3 metres with a width of 3 metres, — and by the catalogue of Daiō-ji, where ninety portraits of Buddha's disciples are referred to. Some of these pictures appear to have been landscapes, others purely decorative drawings, and others of an essentially religious character; but all were either of Chinese origin or in strict accord with the models and methods of the Tang masters. Unfortunately few of them survive. Such authentic examples as have been handed down, however, not only resemble Chinese pictures so as to be distinguishable by experts only, and by them with hesitation, but also indicate that decorative motives were borrowed at that epoch

[1] See Appendix, note 5.

from almost every country of continental Asia as well as from Egypt and Greece. In short, Japan's pictorial and decorative art had not yet developed any distinctive character. Her painters were still living in the Chinese studio, not, however, as altogether immature pupils, for if any of the surviving examples may be attributed to them, — as to which nothing can be affirmed with absolute certainty, — the fact that they had acquired much technical skill, at all events, is placed beyond question.

Originality they began to show, according to the judgment of their own connoisseurs, from the date (794) of the transfer of the Court to Kyōtō. In history, however, there is nothing to suggest any special reason for a new departure at that time. Intercourse with China, especially through Buddhist channels, had grown even closer than before, and the overshadowing influence of Chinese civilisation found expression in the plan of the new capital itself, which was a replica of the Tang metropolis. It is true that the removal of the Court to Kyōtō was partly due to the Emperor Kwammu's revolt against the excessive sway established by Buddhism at Nara. But the effect of that policy upon art — if, indeed, it exercised any effect — would not have been to encourage originality so much as to diminish the vogue enjoyed by religious paintings and to divert men's thoughts to secular pictures. Perhaps that is all that happened, for it is certain that the seeds of originality said to have been sown at the close of the eighth century did not immediately bear any palpable fruit. Kawanari, descended from a Korean *immigré*, was the sower, and of Kawanari's work nothing is known save what tradition tells. His skill is exalted to miraculous

proportions by legends which show incidentally that he painted landscapes, portraits, and other natural subjects, but the sole and somewhat doubtful outcome of his brush that survives is a set of insignificant religious sketches. Nevertheless his countrymen insist that to him and his immediate successor, Kose no Kanaoka, the merit of founding a native school must be assigned. Kanaoka has been placed by many historians at the beginning of Japanese pictorial art, but the logic of evolution is better consulted by putting him near the climax of an epoch, for talent such as he seems to have possessed cannot reasonably be associated with any initiatory stage of art development. Unhappily he too is known to posterity by reputation only. Several pictures are indeed ascribed to him, and, from the evidence they furnish, two descriptions of his style have been confidently adduced: the first declaring that delicacy and minuteness were his characteristics, and that he aimed at decorative effect rather than at boldness or vigour; the second affirming that, like the great Chinese artist Wu-Tao-tsz, upon whom he modelled himself, his conceptions were as broad and lofty as his style was masculine and direct. Either or both analyses may be correct, for the truth is that none of the pictures attributed to Kanaoka can be viewed without great distrust. The ablest judges agree that all must be set aside as apocryphal, and that no materials exist for an estimate except annals which speak with profound enthusiasm of the portraits, landscapes, and representations of animals painted by him. It will be perceived, too, that there is nothing in all this to indicate a departure from Chinese models. The Tang masters also painted landscapes, portraits, and animals, and painted them in

a manner never surpassed by the Japanese. In sum, therefore, nothing can be confidently affirmed except that from the close of the eighth century secular pictures began to be painted in Japan with sufficient success to command the warm admiration of connoisseurs whose judgment had been formed by study of Chinese masterpieces.

Nor must it be imagined that because Kawanari and Kanaoka laid the foundations of a Japanese school of secular painting, the religious picture of the Chinese school fell out of public favour. On the contrary, it held its place almost as firmly as ever. Buddhist priests became famous artists as well as ethical teachers, and, visiting China in constantly increasing numbers, saw models there which they hastened to copy or procured pictures which they carried to Japan. The central figure of these enthusiasts was Kukai, better known by his posthumous title of Kōbō Daishi (790-840), the greatest priest in Japanese history. Repairing to China to complete his religious studies, he had an opportunity of witnessing the civilisation of the Tang dynasty, and on his return to Japan he set himself to propagate, under official auspices, a doctrine (the *Mikkio*), which depended largely on appeals to the sensuous side of human nature, and enlisted in its services whatever aids were furnished by the beautiful, the gorgeous, and the picturesque. In painting and in sculpture alike he attained high renown, and his century is further illuminated by the names of Saicho (commonly called Dengyō Daishi), Jitsuye, Yenchin, and one or two other priests reputed to have been great artists. But posterity knows them in the pages of history alone. Their works have not survived. Not more than three

pictures now remaining, or at most four, can be confidently attributed to the gallery of the ninth century, and among them one alone is identifiable as the production of a particular artist. It is from Kukai's brush, a portrait of his hierarch, Gonso, painted with sufficient vigour and feeling to show that already in the ninth century the religious artists of Japan stood on a plane of high achievement, and that the enthusiastic eulogies bestowed by tradition on their secular contemporaries, Kawanari and Kanaoka, were doubtless not undeserved.

It may be noted here of all Japanese painters down to the twelfth century, perhaps even down to the thirteenth, that they regarded the religious picture as the field of highest achievement, and that, when their subject was a Buddhist divinity, a Nirvana, an Arhat, or a Rishi, they sought inspiration either directly from the Chinese masters or indirectly from the latter's most famous disciples. Religious paintings, like religious propagandism, appeal either to the intellect or to the senses. Pictures of the former class are, of course, the exception; those of the latter, the rule. The characteristics of Japanese Buddhist paintings in general are the characteristics of the illuminated missal: a rich display of gold and of glowing but harmonious colours, with conventional drawing, complete absence of chiaroscuro, apparent errors of anatomy, and faithful observance of traditional types. Sometimes, however, just as the noble thoughts of a great preacher impart new and lofty aspects to the familiar faith he inculcates, so Buddhist pictures from a master hand cease to be a mere repetition of hackneyed types, and reveal glimpses of a world of divine inspirations and emotions. Thus it happens that

several names — above all, those of Hirotaka and Meichō (commonly called Chō Dense) — are specially celebrated for paintings of this class, but the student will find that Japan's best artists in all ages contributed their quota to the pictorial treasures of the temples, and that not until after the twelfth century did the secular picture rise to a place of fully equal importance with the sacred.

Considering what a small number of authenticated pictures offer themselves for examination, an attempt to distinguish between the technical characteristics of the religious, or Chinese, and the secular, or Japanese, schools at this early stage may seem unwarranted. The distinction is made, however, by Japanese connoisseurs, and finds confirmation in later evidence. The secular artist, they say, held his brush oblique, and aimed at a light and fine style of delineation, choosing simple and tender colours. The religious artist held his brush perpendicular; sought accuracy before everything; did not attempt to vary the thickness of his strokes, and used stronger colours than his secular confrere. Such a verdict, it may be remarked, harmonises exactly with the indications furnished by the calligraphical styles of the Chinese and the Japanese. Both starting from the same point, one nation preserved the square, formal, and mathematically exact type of ideograph, whereas the other developed a cursive, graceful, and unconventional script.

The divergence of the Japanese secular artist's brush from strictly Chinese lines gradually became so marked that, in about a hundred years from the time of Kanaoka, — that is to say, in the middle of the tenth century, — the public clearly recognised the

existence of a native school, and called it *Yamato-riu*, or *Waga-riu*, synonyms for "Japanese style." The reported founder of the school was Kasuga Motomitsu, but from what has been related here it will be seen that his genius represented the outcome of a tendency rather than its origin. He did not suggest the new route, but showed rather what could be achieved by following the route that Kawanari and Kanaoka had already indicated. Artists are necessarily swayed in their choice of motives by the circumstances of their era. As the city of Kyōtō grew in wealth and luxury, its social life gradually ceased to be overshadowed by religious influences, and for the decoration of screens and sliding doors in palaces and mansions people began to desire representations of natural scenery, of festivals, of flowery landscapes, and of such other subjects as might reflect and harmonise with the refined and voluptuous habits of their existence. It is thus in the direction of motives, not of technique, that the new departure can be traced most clearly, the artist no longer seeking inspiration in the field of sacred mythology, but turning rather to the realm of every-day life, — court ceremonials, legendary lore, incidents in the biographies of celebrated men, episodes suggested by poetry or history, and scenic gems. In short, decorative beauty had to be considered by the Yamato artists at least as much as pictorial excellence, one consequence of which necessity was that they gradually began to use fuller-bodied tints, and to contrive that a picture should produce a general effect as well as a special; in other words, that when seen from a distance too great to distinguish details, it should still be delightful as a scheme of harmonised colours. In the hands of great masters

HERON.

By Seishiu.



a picture often assumed this dual character with admirable success, but the abuses of the conception were sometimes shocking. They grew more marked as the school advanced in age, and ultimately the elements of a painting came to be disposed with such care for decorative effect that the coloured areas conveyed a suggestion of diapers or brocaded patterns. Such freaks, however, did not obtain vogue until the sixteenth century, and were confined chiefly to what may be called the book illustrations of the time; namely, paintings on interminably long scrolls inscribed with historical or biographical records.[1]

The Yamato artists are often said to have failed signally in their delineations of the human figure; to have followed traditional types, generally ungraceful and unnatural, and to have drawn faces, legs, and arms that seldom approximated to correctness. That criticism must not be accepted too implicitly. It is certainly true when applied to the work done by the rank and file of the school; but in the case of the masters close examination generally reveals that the outlines of their figures diverge, not from the standard of absolute correctness, but from the standard which the critic himself has been accustomed to regard as normal. They show lines which assuredly exist in nature, but which are not the lines that Europeans and Americans have taught themselves to consider salient.

The Yamato school is sometimes spoken of as the Kasuga, after its alleged founder Kasuga Motomitsu, and sometimes the Kasuga is regarded as a branch of the Yamato. From the middle of the thirteenth century the name was changed to *Tosa-riu*, the prin-

[1] See Appendix, note 6.

cipal representative of the academy at that time having been honoured with the title of *Tosa Gon-no-kumi*. Thenceforth through every era the successive artists of the school bore the family name "Tosa." Japanese connoisseurs maintain that for a time the styles of the Kasuga and the Tosa could be clearly differentiated, the former being distinguished by its fine and flowing brush-work, the latter by the boldness, firmness, and directness of its touch. But these differences soon became imperceptible, and that they had ever existed was forgotten by all except the keenest critics. The characteristics of the Tosa masters were magnificent combinations of colours and remarkable skill of composition. They may be called decorators and illustrators rather than painters of pictures as the term is generally understood, for their best work is found on screens, sliding doors, and historical or legendary scrolls. Indeed, as historical illustrators they are quite peerless, for in no other country can be found pictorial annals such as those with which they enriched Japan during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the first half of the fourteenth. A long list of illustrious names belongs to that era, culminating in the fourteenth century with Takashima Takekane, of whom his countrymen allege that among all the crowded scenes of court, camp, and domestic life depicted on his scrolls, no two show the same grouping.

Although the records indicate that Kose no Kanaoka followed Kawanari in popularising secular, or Japanese, pictures, the Kose school subsequently came to be regarded as representing the Chinese style, the works of its masters being in marked accord with what were known as classical canons. Several of those

masters had the honour of holding the position of "painter laureate" (*edokoro*), a post created in the year 808. After Kanaoka the greatest artist of the school during the Heian epoch — namely, from the ninth to the twelfth century — was Hirotaka, a prince of the blood, whose works are said to have stood out from the canvas like living pictures. He occupied himself chiefly with religious pictures, whereas two other masters of the school at the same epoch, Kintada and Kimmochi, became celebrated for landscape painting, the former choosing Chinese scenes, the latter Japanese. Other renowned artists of the Kose school in the same epoch were Koreshige and Nobushige.

A branch of the Kose school, namely, the Takuma, is distinguished by Japanese connoisseurs, but in truth the only appreciable difference is that the Takuma masters, following the methods of the Sung painters of China, carried the decorative features of their religious paintings to a degree of unprecedented splendour and elaboration. Takuma Tamenari founded the school in the middle of the eleventh century, and his greatest work, still extant though much defaced by time, was the decoration of the walls and doors of the temple Biyōdō-in at Uji, on which occasion he chose for subjects the nine circles of the Buddhist paradise and eight effigies of Shaka. The bold and brilliant style thus inaugurated found great exponents in later ages, but can scarcely be said to have preserved its individuality after the fourteenth century.

These different schools — the Kose, the Takuma, the Kasuga, and the Tosa — have been mentioned here because their names are on the lips of every Japanese connoisseur. But, for purposes of intelligent understanding, the qualities and characteristics of the four

may be synthesised into a statement that their works had one of three objects, — to promote religious purposes, to decorate the interiors of temples or mansions, and to illustrate scrolls or illuminate missals. The picture for its own sake did not yet exist.

In the twelfth century was born a style of art entirely independent of foreign inspiration. It consisted of humorous sketches, in which not merely the motives but also the drawing was burlesqued. The Japanese have never been notably skilful caricaturists. Even in modern times their attempts to produce comic publications after the fashion of *Punch* or *Life* are not successful, owing to their persistent inability to preserve a likeness while distorting it. In the *Toba-ye*, as humorous pictures were called after their originator — the Priest of the Toba Monastery (*Toba Sōjō*), otherwise Minamoto no Kakuyu — particular emotions were emphasised by exaggerating the part of the body affected by them, so that accuracy of drawing, in the Occidental sense of the term, became a secondary consideration. Kakuyu, though generally remembered only as the father of this school, distinguished himself highly as a painter of religious and secular (*Yamato*) pictures, and the authenticated specimens, a very few rolls, of his comic drawings that have been handed down to posterity, show much power of brush and play of fancy. He had a host of successors in every age, the majority immeasurably inferior, some even greater than himself, and many whose style differed so essentially from his that they had nothing in common with him except a keen sense of humour. To appreciate the work of this school, it is necessary to have an intimate knowledge of Japanese legends, folk-lore, proverbs, history, and

GROUP OF MONKEYS.

By Sosen.



customs, all of which the *Toba-ye* artist illustrated. It is also necessary to remember the art axiom that in naturalistic drawing accuracy of proportion and beauty of line are properly sacrificed to the appearance of life. From the time of Toba Sōjō to the days of Hokusai and Kyōsai, the Japanese humorous painter always recognised that his first duty was to give the character — the burlesque, laughter-provoking character — of the objects he depicted, and that if he succeeded in conveying a strong and immediate impression of that character, his purpose was accomplished, even though his lines were classically incorrect. In short, his work forcibly illustrates the principle that whereas line in classic drawing is generally attained at the expense of life, life in naturalistic drawing is often attained at the expense of line.

In the fourteenth century Japanese art reverted to its old source of inspiration, China. This movement was headed by Josetsu, who took for models the masterpieces of the Middle Kingdom's artists at the close of the Sung and the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, so that to the school thus established was given the name of *So-gen* (Chinese, *Sung-yuan*). Josetsu was a priest of the Zen sect of Buddhism, just then beginning to gain disciples on a large scale in Japan, and he is also said to have been of Chinese origin. There are some close students who deny to him the title of having led the Chinese *renaissance* in Japan. They claim that honour equally for another naturalised Chinese artist, Shōga Shiubun, and for a predecessor of both, Nen Kawo. The fact is, that the tendency of the time was responsible rather than the genius of an individual. Readers of Japanese history know that feudalism was established in the thirteenth century, and that in the

fourteenth all society had become permeated with the military spirit. The canons of the *bushi* were the ethics of the era, and the austere philosophy of the Zen creed commended itself to a large section of the educated class. It was natural that this change should be reflected in the region of æsthetics, and since Chinese art happened to be passing at the time through a phase which accorded excellently with Japan's mood, the old relation of pupil and teacher was re-established insensibly without a strong initiative on the part of any special artist. The style of painting then inaugurated found its chief expression in monochromatic, or lightly coloured, landscapes and seascapes of great delicacy, fidelity, and beauty, and in wonderfully lifelike, vigorous sketches of birds, flowers, and foliage.

It is characteristic of this school, which has had numerous representatives in every era since its foundation by the emigrant monks of Kyōtō, that its motives, like its style, were generally exotic. Until modern times, the Japanese usually loved to derive examples of chivalry, of statesmanship, of warlike prowess, of philosophy, of filial piety, of feudal devotion, and of legendary folk-lore from the annals of the Middle Kingdom. Hence the artists of the fourteenth-century *renaissance*, and their followers in almost every era, chose Chinese motives for their pictures, and instead of drawing inspiration direct from the exquisite scenery of their own country and the noble acts of their own countrymen and countrywomen, were content to copy Chinese ideals of landscape, and to devote themselves to illustrating Chinese traditions. It is easy to conceive what a despotism of methods, of mannerisms, and of conventionali-

ties would reign in such a school. Just as West's great picture of Wolfe's death was supposed to violate all the proprieties of art because the figures were depicted in eighteenth-century coats and hats instead of in Grecian "drapery" or Roman togas, so the Japanese disciple of the Chinese school had to obey canons which cramped his originality and were only saved from becoming anachronistic by the immemorial conservatism of the Chinese nation. Concerning the excellences of this school, it may be said that, apart from force, directness, and delicacy of line, which are common to all Japanese masters, there is a really remarkable sense of "values;" a subtle attention to colour gradations and atmospheric conditions, which would have given almost perfect results had the principle been uniformly recognised that nature does not show accented outlines, that edges are never the deepest notes of colour in her landscapes and seascapes. A very appreciative paragraph from Anderson's "Pictorial Arts of Japan" may be quoted here: —

The Chinese artist was often remarkably felicitous in the renderings of the wilder forms of picturesque beauty in landscape. Silvery cascades; tranquil pools and winding streams; towering silicic peaks and rugged headlands; gnarled fantastic pines and plum-trees, side by side with the graceful forms and feathery foliage of the bamboo; mansions or pavilions, gorgeous in vermilion and gold, crowning the heights or bordering the expanse of an inland lake, and rustic cottages with straw-thatched roofs nestling in the cultivated valleys: these were elements that the painter could assort and reconstruct into a thousand pictures of never-failing interest and beauty. The Japanese painters of the classical schools, seduced by the charm of the foreign ideal, were often led to neglect the familiar attractions of their own

scenery, and without having beheld any of the spots depicted by the old landscape-masters of China, squandered an infinity of talent and ingenuity in building up new creations of their own with the material borrowed at second hand from their neighbours.

Connoisseurs are wont to divide into three great streams the flood of Chinese *renaissance* that invaded Japan in the fifteenth century; the purely Chinese stream, just spoken of as springing from Josetsu and Shiubun; the Sesshiu stream, springing from Sesshiu, whom many count the most colossal figure in Japanese art; and the Kano stream, springing from Masanobu and Motonobu, who, whether they rank above or below Sesshiu, certainly founded the chief academy of Japanese painters. The reader will at once seek some explanation of the reasons underlying this division. It is difficult to give any that can be called satisfactory. As to Sesshiu, some Japanese connoisseurs claim that he developed a peculiar style of his own, untrammelled by classical conditions. To Occidental eyes, however, this independence is not easily apparent. He adhered to Chinese motives and Chinese methods as faithfully as did Shiubun and his disciples, and no dictum appears truer than that Sesshiu was "the open door through which all contemporary and subsequent artists looked into the seventh heaven of Chinese genius." Masanobu and Motonobu, the founders of the Kano school, were not less "classic" than Sesshiu. In the works of all three masters, though in varying degree, there are found the noble breadth of design, the subtle relationship of tones, the splendid calligraphic force and the "all-pervading sense of poetry" that constituted the highest features of Chinese pictorial art in the Tang, Sung, and Yuan

MOONLIGHT ON THE SNOW.

By Motonobu.

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epochs. For all purposes of true appreciation it seems sufficient to say that the fifteenth century was the culminating period of Chinese pictorial art in Japan, and that its giant figures, Shiubun, Sesshiu, Masanobu, and Motonobu, though they stand at the head of three distinct lines of artists, drew their inspiration from the same source and set before themselves the same ideals. Motonobu's masterpieces had the special excellence of being free from the hard outlines which in Sesshiu's pictures offend against natural laws; but this superiority is partly balanced by loss of vigour and massiveness.

The immediate object of these notes being to trace the development of Japanese art itself, not the history of Japanese artists, reference is omitted to the names of several great disciples upon whom the mantle of the four *renaissance* masters fell, and the reader is invited to pass at once to the closing years of the sixteenth century, when a new departure was made by two leaders of the Kano school, Eitoku and Sanraku. It has been shown above that pure Chinese influence reached its first culminating point in the ninth century, when Kose no Kanaoka won immortal fame, and that his classical style continued to monopolise the field of pictorial art until the eleventh century, when Motomitsu founded the Yamato, or Japanese school, which subsequently developed decorative characteristics, and finally, in the hands of the Tosa masters, became more remarkable for rich colour harmonies and gorgeous illuminations than for any of the qualities recognised by classical canons. So, too, it is found that the rebirth of Chinese influence in the fifteenth century, which speedily reached the zenith of its glory in the hands of Sesshiu, was followed, within less

than two hundred years, by a decorative impulse precisely analogous to that represented by the genesis and growth of the Yamato school. Eitoku and Sanraku introduced this decorative method in the Kano academies at the close of the sixteenth century, just as the internecine wars by which the country had been tortured for five hundred years were drawing to a close, and feudal castles and noblemen's residences of unprecedented massiveness and magnificence were beginning to be built throughout the Empire. Eitoku created, perhaps, the greatest purely decorative style of painting that the East has ever produced. His style accurately reflected the fashions and tendencies of his time, when, under the rule of Hideyoshi, the administrative power began to be associated with displays of imposing magnificence, and when æstheticism, officially inspired, found expression in the lavish adornment of castles, temples, and palaces, and in the construction of beautiful parks. On the walls and sliding-doors of these edifices, Eitoku, Sanraku, and their fellows produced pictures glowing with gold and rich colour-harmonies. The decorative artists that preceded them had used the precious metal sparingly for picking out designs, whereas they employed it to form wide fields on which they painted episodes of war, phases of aristocratic life, or subjects taken from the kingdom of flowers and foliage, the *ensemble* conveying a suggestion of rich gems clustered in broad areas of mellow gold.

Perhaps it should be added here that though the decorative mode represented by the Yamato-Tosa school undoubtedly preceded that of the Kano school, the former began to be strongly conspicuous almost simultaneously with the development of the latter,

and both are to be traced to the political and economic conditions of the time rather than to any independent art impulse. The whole period of the Tokugawa Regency's sway — that is to say, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the first half of the nineteenth — was marked by profound peace and by the spread of luxurious habits hitherto confined to the great administrative families in the Imperial capital. The applied arts certainly attained their highest development during those centuries, and it is probably safe to say that in no other country nor at any other epoch, ancient or modern, were the services of pictorial art so widely and so successfully employed for decorative purposes. Further, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, a patriotic reaction can be traced against the slavish adherence of the classical schools to Chinese motives and methods, and a growing impulse to favour the work of the Kano and Tosa masters, who chose Japanese subjects and attached to the decorative quality in their pictures importance which brought them into close touch with the architectural developments of the time. Doubtless this taste for exquisite harmonies of colour and glowing yet tender tints, grand illustrations of which may be seen in the interior decoration of temples, palaces, and mansions, owed something to a contemporaneous change in Chinese pictorial methods, — a change from the noble simplicity and force of the Tang, Sung, and Yuan monochromes to the strong, full-bodied colours and microscopically elaborate style of the later Ming pictures. But the influence of Chinese artists was not a prime factor in the movement: it must be regarded rather as a reflection of the development of Japanese civilisation under the Tokugawa Regents, the ten-

dency, if not the aim, of whose policy was to cultivate the growth of an effeminate, splendour-loving mood among the aristocratic classes in lieu of the fiercely ambitious temper of mediæval militarism.

The sequence of development arrives now at the *Ukiyo-ye Riu*, or "Popular school," as it has been generally called by Western critics. The word *ukiyo* literally signifies "floating world;" that is to say, this transient world, or every-day life. Hence, when a Japanese speaks of *ukiyo-ye* (*ye* signifies picture) he means simply *genre* paintings — representations of persons and things that belong to the ephemeral scenes among which the artist moves. It is generally alleged that the so-called Popular school owed its origin to Iwasa Matahei, a painter who flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century. But the statement is somewhat misleading. A careful reader of what has been written above will see that, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, incidents of national life furnished to the Tosa masters their chief motives, and that, down to the Chinese *renaissance* in the fifteenth century, artists did not hesitate to seek subjects for delineation in the daily doings of the plebeian classes. Even the great founders of the Kano school, men whose works support comparison with the masterpieces of Chinese genius, had no fear of degrading their art or alienating aristocratic patronage when they depicted episodes from the kitchen, the stable, the farmyard, and the workshop. The truth is, that in the rise and development of the Popular school must be traced, not a new artistic departure, but simply a reflection of the changes which the civilisation of the era was undergoing. From the end of the sixteenth century, the actor, the

QUAIL AND RICE.

By Tosa.

courtesan, and the *danseuse* began to occupy an unprecedented place in every-day life, and became the centres of a voluptuous æstheticism which constantly presented new spectacular attractions for dilettanti, and made new appeals to the artistic as well as the sensuous instincts of the people. Matahei caught the first note of this innovation and fixed it pictorially with wonderful fidelity. The figure-subjects which constitute his specialty are instinct with refined sensuality and graceful abandon. He introduces his public to a life where dancing, music, and sybaritism in every form are beginning to take the place of politics and war, and where even the strong contours of the male figure show a tendency to merge into the soft curves of the female. He did not succeed, however, in transmitting his inspiration to any of his pupils or immediate successors, and it was not till the close of the seventeenth century, when Hishigawa Moronobu employed the art of wood-engraving to bring the *ukiyo-ye* within reach of the masses, that the Popular school began to assume a really important place, and to associate itself directly with the production of chromo-xylographs which are now the wonder and the delight of Western collectors. The story of the chromo-xylographic development and of the wealth of artistic treasures and technical triumphs that it has bequeathed to Japan, deserves an independent treatise, but it is not possible here to note more than the most salient facts.

There is some uncertainty about the origin of wood-engraving in Japan. It is generally attributed to the ninth century. That would make it fully a hundred years subsequent to the introduction of block-printing, which came from China certainly not later

than the middle of the eighth century. Nothing like proficiency was attained, however, until the time (1320) of a priest named Ryōkin, and even his productions — a few of which are extant — derive interest from their period rather than their quality.[1] All the motives of the early woodcuts were religious. The blocks, being preserved in temples, served for printing pictures of deities which were distributed to pilgrim worshippers. Apparently the idea of using engravings for illustrating printed matter did not suggest itself until the sixteenth century, but from that time woodcuts began to be freely inserted in the pages of historical romances, poetical anthologies, and other kinds of literature. These pictures were not remarkable. Draughtsmen of talent did not concern themselves in their production, and it was not until the last quarter of the seventeenth century that xylography began to be applied to really artistic purposes. Hishigawa Moronobu and Okamura Masanobu were the two artists who supplied drawings for this new departure. Their work was vigorous, their composition clever, and the engraver did his part so well that woodcuts of really high merit were produced. Almost immediately the potentialities of this branch of art were recognised, and a number of very beautiful albums appeared, chiefly from the brushes of Ooka Shunboku and Tachibana no Morikumi. They contained accurate copies of pictures by the great Chinese and Japanese masters of previous eras, as well as lessons for young painters and suggestions for decorative designs covering the whole range of applied art. Another extensive field for the employment of woodcuts was the popular novel, which grew out of

[1] See Appendix, note 7.

the *monogatari*, or historical romance. Nearly all the great artists of the *Ukiyo-ye* school assisted in the illustration of these books, though it is plain that they did not consider the task worthy of their best efforts. Much more elaborate work appears in the pages of the "illustrated accounts of celebrated places" (*meisho-zuye*), several of which were compiled in each important city or province, for the purpose of depicting the scenic features of the locality and recording everything of topical interest. In fine, before the middle of the eighteenth century, Japanese xylography had attained a stage of development much higher than that reached at the same epoch in Europe.

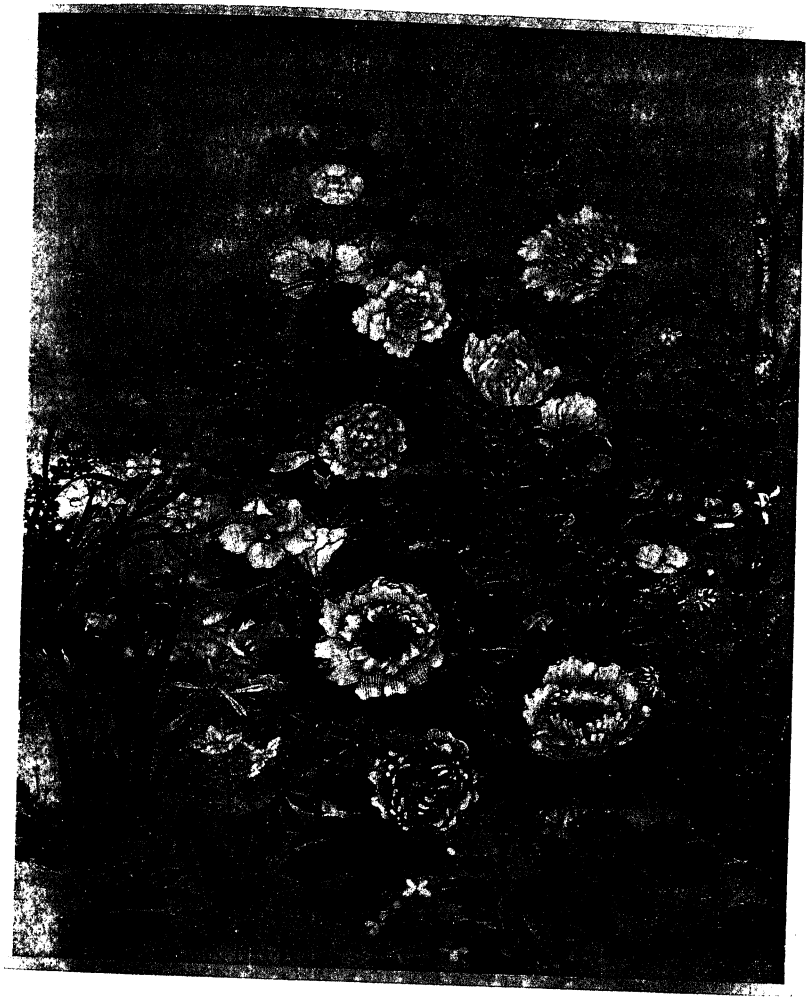
Very soon after the woodcut had begun to be used artistically for purposes of illustration, the practice of colouring it by hand came into vogue. At first, only two colours were used, orange and green, but yellow was subsequently added. It is evident that the painter desired to preserve the quality of the line engraving, and that he subordinated these broad, decorative effects of colour to the character of the black and white drawing. Among hand-coloured prints two kinds are sometimes mistaken for chromo-xylographs. They are the *tan-ye*, or orange picture, and the *urushi-ye*, or lacquered picture. The former derived its name from the fact that orange was the dominant colour, yellow the secondary; and the latter was so called because of the addition of black lacquer, which helped to emphasise the delicate lines of the engraving, though occasionally it threw the other colours out of scale. In some cases the heaviness of the black lacquer was relieved by a sprinkling of gold leaf. All this work, though it produced many beautiful examples, needs only cursory mention.

China could have taught chromo-xylographic processes to Japan while the latter was still content with hand-coloured engravings. No sufficient explanation has ever been offered of the fact that the Japanese were so slow to borrow from their neighbours in this field. Probably the truth is that the Chinese chromo-xylograph never appealed to Japanese taste, and never deserved to appeal to it. At all events, the Chinese understood colour-printing early in the seventeenth century, whereas the Japanese did not begin to practise it until nearly the middle of the eighteenth.[1] Their first essays were simple, the colours used being only two, red and green. The artists whose names were connected with this innovation are Torii Kiyonobu and Torii Kiyomasu, followed immediately by Okamura Masanobu, then an old man, and by Torii Kiyohiro, Torii Kiyomitsu, and Torii Kiyoshige. These prints received the name of *beni-ye* (vermilion pictures), in consequence of the red predominating in the scheme of colour. Many of them are admirable examples of skilful massing, disposing, and contrasting of colours. The artists evidently appreciated at its full value the technical superiority of colour printing over hand painting, namely, steady, even tints and absence of bewildering gradations of tone. The next step was from the "vermilion picture" to the print of three, or even four, colours. Some ten or twelve years had elapsed before the change took place, and during that time the artists had fully mastered the basic principles of colour composition for such purposes, and had learned the subtleties of balance and harmony. Torii Kyomitsu now produced beautiful prints, in which secondary colours were developed

[1] See Appendix, note 8.

FLOWER STUDY.

By Korin.



by superposition of primary, so that, while still using only three blocks, red, blue, yellow, purple, and green were obtained, which, with the black and white of the print, gave a scheme of seven colours. At this point (about 1760) Suzuki Harunobu appeared. By many connoisseurs he is counted the greatest master of *nishiki-ye*,[1] and the title rests on at least three solid foundations, namely, the delicacy of his line drawing, the delightful softness and music of his colours, and the atmosphere of fresh innocence with which he envelops his female figures. But Harunobu's conceptions of life and its graces recall the declining day of Heian civilisation, when "cloud gallants" painted their eyebrows, powdered their faces, and aped femininity. His work is never robust; his men are scarcely distinguishable from women; he deforms hands and feet to make them slender, and he knows only one type of female beauty which he produces and reproduces unceasingly. Nevertheless to him undoubtedly belongs the credit of having inaugurated a new and almost final departure in Japanese chromo-xylography. He abandoned the drawing of actors to which his contemporaries had hitherto confined themselves, — a limitation which, in turn, confined their public to the lower middle classes, since the theatre and everything appertaining to it belonged essentially to vulgar life, — and he set himself to design chromo-xylographic pictures of ladies and gentlemen amid the luxuries of their lives and the refinements of their pastimes. Further, he included backgrounds in his scheme of colours; multiplied the number of blocks so as to produce a variety of tints, strong, light, and soft; changed the shape of the

[1] See Appendix, note 9.

paper, and added embossing, which greatly increased the representative capabilities of the art. From his time no marked advance was made. None, indeed, was possible. There was elaboration, but no important innovation. In the same category with Harunobu stand a large school of brilliant artists, great in a pictorial as well as a decorative sense: Koriusai, Katsukawa Shunsho, Ippitsusai, Buncho, Katsukawa Shunyei, Utagawa Toyonobu, Utagawa Toyoharu, Kitao Shigemasa, Kubo Shunman, Torii Kiyonaga, Shuncho, Chobunsai, Yeishi, Kikugawa Utamaro, Utagawa Toyokuni, Hokusai, Hokkei, and Hiroshige. They cover a space from 1750 to 1850, just a century. As to which of them deserves to be placed on the throne of chromo-xylographic art, there are differences of opinion, but the honour certainly belongs to one of these four, Utamaro, Kiyonaga, Harunobu, and Koriusai. Some hold that everything culminated in Kiyonaga (1780–1795), that everything subsequent to him was a degeneration, and that everything good in contemporary or later art was due to his influence. But the longer the chromo-xylographs of Japan are studied and the wider the student's range of acquaintance with them, the more does Kikugawa Utamaro force himself into the first place, alike for vigour, for versatility, for tenderness, for truth of line, and for beauty of colour harmonies.

After Hiroshige, whose landscapes are among the finest pictures of the chromo-xylographic gallery, nothing good was produced. Indeed the era of decadence had set in long before Hiroshige designed his last prints (1855), though the end was postponed by several admirable artists. At one time (1842), and that not by any means the golden age of the art, the

Yedo government, in a mood of economy, deemed it necessary to issue a sumptuary law prohibiting the sale of various kinds of chromo-xylographs, — single-sheet pictures of actors, danseuses, and "dames of the green chamber": pictures in series of three sheets or upwards, and pictures in the printing of which more than seven blocks were used. The prohibition held for twelve years only, but it certainly contributed to hasten the decadence which had already begun. As to that decadence, not much need be said. Its features force themselves upon the attention of the most superficial student. From the exquisite pictures of Utamaro, Kiyonaga, Harunobu, and their rivals, to the meritless, meretricious work of later artists there is an immense interval in quality though a brief interval of years. It would be a misconception to assume, however, that the ability to produce beautiful chromo-xylographs has been lost. It is there still, as was recently proved by a notable revival with which the names of Ogata Gekko, Watanabe Seitei, Kiyōsai, and Kansai were connected. But the art has been vulgarised. The coloured print has become chiefly a child's toy. Artists can no longer afford to superintend the technical processes of its production, and cheap flaring, violent pigments imported from abroad have taken the place of the delicate, rich, and costly colours of old Japan.

One of the facts which the student of the Far East soon learns to expect is that Occidental precedents must be reversed to suit Japanese methods. In Europe or America the engraver on wood must be able to express light and shade by line or dot, and to distinguish between textures by means of his "line." It is frequently necessary for him to reproduce the very

brush-marks of the artist in order to retain the character of the original. Hence the credit of the picture does not belong solely to the artist, but is shared by the engraver. In Japan the engraver has no honour; he is a mere artisan. This interesting point will be understood from the following description of the Japanese chromo-xylographic process (furnished by Mr. S. Tuke, one of the most zealous students of the subject): —

In the first place, the artist will compose his original design somewhat in this fashion. He commences with a small rough sketch, perhaps on an odd scrap of paper. Next he proceeds to make an outline drawing with a brush dipped in very thin and pale Indian ink on a sheet of paper of the requisite size. Having corrected this and satisfied himself with his performance, he will carefully and accurately draw in the whole outline in black ink. If this outline is not entirely satisfactory, he will make a corrected tracing upon thin paper. In this case he may partially paint the original picture with the colour printing.

At this stage the wood-engraver's services are called in. Having procured a block of cherry wood of the desired dimensions and sawn with the grain (not across the grain, as is our habit in the West), the original drawing, or the tracing as the case may be, will be pasted face down upon the block. If the drawing cannot be distinctly seen through the back of the paper, its upper layers will be very carefully rubbed off with a wet hand or cloth, until the outline can be clearly seen through the thinnest possible film of paper. Having received the requisite instructions from the artist, the engraver will commence to carve out the space between the black portions of the design, leaving the black outline alone in relief. This operation concluded, and the fragments of paper having been removed with a brush, the outline having been made, the first stage will be completed. In the case of an ordinary print in black and white the engraver's labours are now ended, but in the case of a

SUNRISE ON THE SEASHORE.

By Nomura Bunkyo.



colour print he still has duties to perform, as will be presently seen.

The printer's services are now required, and a certain number of copies will be printed, on thin paper, from the outline block — one copy at least for each colour which is to appear in the finished picture. The artist's help will now again be needed, and if he has not already coloured portions of the original drawing, he will colour, entirely or in part, one of these printed copies as a model for the finished picture. Then he will paint, possibly by tracing on another of these outline copies, all portions of the picture that are of the same colour; on another copy, in the same way, the parts of the picture that are of another colour, and so on, until he has thus painted as many single-colour copies as there are colours in the finished picture. Each of these coloured copies is now pasted on a separate block of cherry wood. The engraver then resumes work. He carves away the whole surface of each block, including the outline, leaving only in relief the coloured part of the design. In each case he also carves at the corner and edge of the block a rectangular nick and a guiding line, which correspond exactly to a similar nick and guiding line in the outline block. A separate block having thus been produced for each colour, the remains of the paper copies will be removed, and unless any alterations are required, the engraver's work is concluded. Although it is difficult to overrate the amount of skill often exhibited by the Japanese wood-engraver, it is easy to see from this description how thoroughly subordinate he is to the artist.

Printing is the next process. The various blocks now pass into the hands of an operator of little less importance than the engraver in point of skill, and requiring much greater artistic talent. In a work of any importance the artist, having selected his paper and directed the mixing of the various colours, will probably superintend the printing of the first proofs. But there is no printing-press. The outline block is placed face upwards upon a stool or upon the floor, and the portions in relief are carefully painted with an ink brush. A sheet of paper is then placed upon

the block, one of its corners in the rectangular nick, its edge against the guiding line, and retained in position by one of the printer's hands. He will next proceed to pass a flat padded disc over the back of the paper with his other hand, exercising the requisite amount of pressure with his arm. The whole of this process will be repeated until he has printed off the number of outline proofs required for the first issue. He then replaces the outline block with one of the colour blocks, and applies the colour to the portions of the surface that are in relief. Should any shading be required, he will carefully wipe the colour in gradation partially off the requisite portions with either his hand or a damp rag. This shading, of course, requires very nice manipulation, but it is a process not unknown to English etchers. One of the outline proofs is now placed on the colour block, its corner in the nick, and its edge against the guiding line, so that the coloured portions take their right position in the picture. The padded disc is now passed over the proof, after which it is removed and fresh colour having been applied, another proof takes the place of the former. This process will be continued until the proofs of the first issue have all been printed in one colour. Then the process is similarly repeated with each colour block in turn, and the first issue of our *nishiki-ye* is now finished and ready for the market. It will probably be a small issue, to the end that the artist, should he not be contented with the result, may be able to make alterations before the outline block has lost its freshness. Such alterations may be effected in several ways, either by an entire redistribution of colour on the old colour blocks, by the substitution of new colour blocks for old, or by an increase in their number.

It is not unusual to employ a block carved with a design of some sort which is not coloured, but serves to stamp a pattern in relief. In printing from such blocks extra pressure is resorted to. Some of the effects thus obtained are very attractive.

To obtain good prints it is necessary, in the first place, that the nick and guiding lines should be exactly in their right place on each block, and, in the second, that the

printer should exercise very great care in placing each sheet accurately in position on each successive block. Otherwise the colours will overlap the outlines of one another.

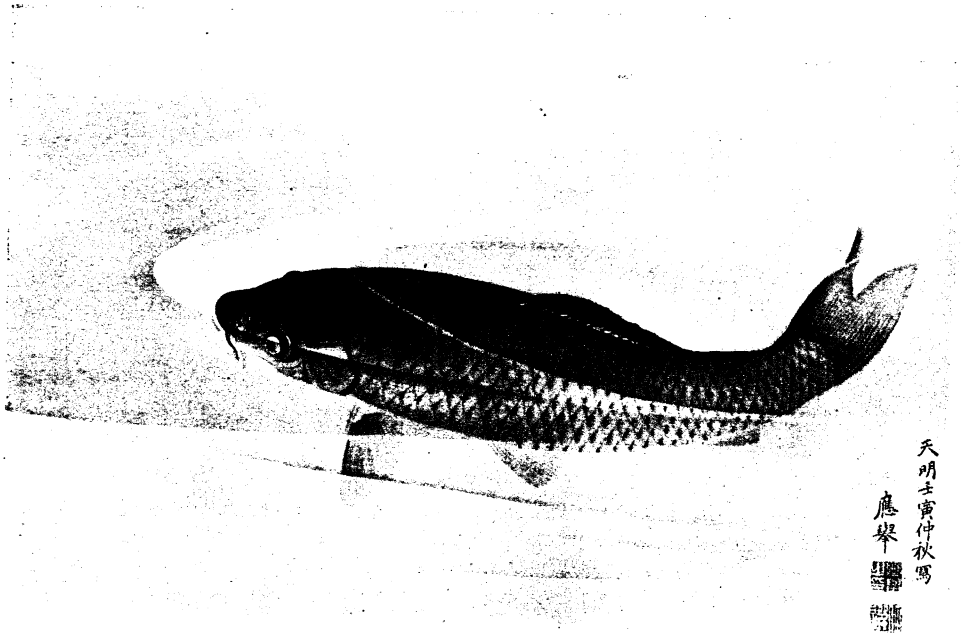
Of course, in the greater number of cases the artist will leave many of the duties here assigned to him to his subordinates. In recent times, this must have to a great extent been the case, and both engraving and printing, to say nothing of the arrangement of the colour blocks, must have been left to the supervision of a pupil, or even in the hands of the engraver, or, more likely still, in those of the publishing printer.

What are the special charms which have won for the paintings, woodcuts, and chromo-xylographs of the *ukiyo-ye* masters such applause in Europe and America? How is it that a branch of pictorial art which Japanese connoisseurs have always regarded with a certain measure of contempt, evokes the unstinted admiration of Occidental critics? Some answer the question by reference to the motives of the pictures. Here, they say, we have accurate representations of the people's occupations and pastimes, of domestic life with all its graces and conventions, of the *fête* and the festival, of love, of battle, of the chase, of elf-land, of the theatre, of the *danseuse*, of the *demi-monde*, of highway scenes, and of street panoramas. Some, again, reply by pointing to the immense mine of decorative wealth that Western designers may find in the detail of the *nishiki-ye*. Such comments are doubtless true, but they appear very unsatisfying. It is not to obtain information about Japanese fashions and habits, nor yet to find a novel pattern for a book cover or a wall-paper, that the collectors of New York, of Boston, of Paris, and of London eagerly seek and jealously preserve these specimens of Japanese art. Other reasons present

themselves. Chiefly to harmony of colour does the *ukiyo-ye* owe its charm. There is no ground for supposing, indeed it may be confidently denied, that the Japanese ever approached the problem of colour from a scientific point of view; that they knew anything about the law of complements and contrasts; that they possessed a definite idea about the relief of warm colours by cool, or the blending of similar notes and tones by gradation. But their practice shows that they fully appreciated the prime qualities of colour symphony, — richness, accordance, and mellowness. There is never a shrill or strident note in these musical pictures. The primitive colours are there sufficiently to produce strength and volume, but always delicacy of shade and softness of hue are the pervading characteristics, and the broken tones blend gently without jar or conflict. If the chromo-xylograph be considered in the sequel of the magnificent monochromes of Shiubun, Sesshiu, Jasoku, the Kanos, and other giants of the classical schools, where the painter's appreciation of "value" amounts almost to an unerring instinct, the student is led to conclude that Japanese artists did not attempt to elaborate scientific theories, but went direct to nature for their teaching, thus discovering and applying the fundamental law that every shade of colour has its proper place in a scene, and must hold a fixed relation to its associates in the general scale. The *ukiyo-ye* seems, in short, to have arrived in the regular order of evolution, for the artist passed from a knowledge of low keys and simple colour compositions, developed in the Chinese schools, to a profound sense of the wider scope and fuller harmony of high diversified colours, and thus succeeded in combining the flame and glow of sun-

CARP IN STREAM.

By Ōkio.


天明壬寅仲秋寫
應舉

shine brilliancy with the tenderness and refinement of twilight tints.

But while admitting his greatness as a colourist, many critics have condemned his drawing. They complain that the linear character of the objects he depicts is not accurate, that anatomical laws are often violated in his figures, that he appears to be without any exact knowledge of form. It would scarcely be correct to endorse that criticism unreservedly. A more discerning verdict is that the Japanese artist, to whichever of the schools he belonged, sacrificed truth of detail to truth of mass. His first aim was to obtain the appearance of life; accuracy of proportion seemed a secondary consideration. Each painter had his type which he idealised more or less, his idealism not being confined to the face but extending to the physique and even to the anatomy of his figures. If the details of the drawing violate accepted canons, complaint is silenced by the sense of life that pervades the whole; by the perfect naturalness of every attitude, every movement, every gesture; by the eloquence with which the character of the objects speaks from the picture. In short, accuracy is sacrificed to the individuality that everything in nature possesses, — the individuality which, in actual experience, impresses itself upon the attention of the observer and excludes all thought of linear exactness or anatomical truth. Kiyōsai, the greatest modern representative of the Popular school, used to say exactly what Véron has said, namely, that nothing in nature pauses to be portrayed; that there is motion everywhere, — if not actual motion in the object itself, then motion of the light falling on it or of the atmosphere surrounding it; that without elasticity of line the sense of life

cannot be obtained, and that elasticity of line is incompatible with what the classicists call strict accuracy. Kiyōsai, as his sketch books showed, knew all about the structure of the human hand and foot, but the hands and feet that he drew in his pictures would have been wholly condemned by a Bouguereau or an Ingres.

There has already been occasion to note, as a general criticism, that in Japanese pictures — not excepting those that delight by their fleeting impression of life and movement, by the appearance of reality and character they convey — a discord is often created by the intrusion of accentuated outlines among natural surroundings. This defect is least observable in the paintings and chromo-xylographs of the Popular school, because their motives are usually human figures and drapery, subjects which not only permit but require some recognition of outline; and if, occasionally, the student is disposed to quarrel even with Kiyonaga, Harunobu, Utamaro, Toyokuni, or Yeishi for their emphasis of outlines, he forgives them readily for the sake of the charm of manner, the exquisite grace of gesture, and the superb rhythm of movement that their figure subjects display.

Passing, further, to the question of composition, it may be said that in this feature the *ukiyo-ye* paintings stand on a very high level. More unstinted praise has indeed been bestowed on them, but when "composition" is here spoken of, reference is made to the perfect arrangement to which all the factors of pictorial art must contribute their share, — not merely flow and force of line, harmony of colour and due relation of tones, but also linear perspective and chiaroscuro. Some of the artists of the Popular

school understood linear perspective sufficiently not to offend by obvious disregard of its rules, but they neglected chiaroscuro, and that defect disqualified their composition to be called a faultless achievement, which epithet would otherwise be often applicable to their admirable grouping of pictorial elements.

This brief analysis may be closed by referring to one fault conspicuous in all these artists' work: they did not understand the light-suggestions without which textures and surfaces cannot be rendered. They relied upon line and colour to produce effects which are due in nature to the uneven distribution, absorption, or reflection of light. Hence, while they show with admirable accuracy the folds of drapery and the patterns winding and flowing through all its plies, they fail to tell whether the surface represented is that of velvet or of silk or of cotton. It has been well said that in judging pictures one must consider what the painter succeeds in doing, and not be forever critical about what he fails to do. The *ukiyo-ye* artists achieved so much that much may be forgiven to them, but since *genre* pictures are certainly the proper field for the display of texture painting, the absence of this quality in the *ukiyo-ye* work cannot be left unnoticed.

The naturalistic tendency of which the pictures of the Popular school are the most characteristic outcome, found very refined and beautiful expression in the works of Maruyama Okio (born 1733, died 1795), a Kyōtō artist, who must be regarded as one of the greatest painters Japan ever produced. Okio is generally spoken of as the founder of the *Shi-jo* school (*Shi-jo* is the name of a part of Kyōtō), and his contemporary Kishi Doshi (known artistically as

"Ganku") is placed at the head of a separate school, the *Ganku Riu*. But though the individuality of each master impressed itself on his style sufficiently, perhaps, to justify this independent classification, both are nothing more than great representatives of the naturalistic sentiment of the era, and both are differentiated from their *Ukiyo-ye* contemporaries chiefly by the fact that they never devoted their talents to the purposes of the woodcut or the chromo-xylograph. In force, grace, tenderness, and accuracy of line Okio has no superior among Japanese artists. He went direct to nature for instruction, but into all his exquisite pictures of birds, flowers, grasses, fish, insects, quadrupeds, and figures, he introduced a subjective element as eloquent as it is indescribable. It has been said that his drawing of the human figure showed all the anatomical errors of his predecessors, but it must also be said that the question of anatomy never presents itself for a moment in connection with his pictures, and that one has no more inclination to criticise his manner of articulating bones and moulding muscles than one has to remember the surgical solecisms of Michael Angelo or Delacroix. With the exceptions of Mori Sosen and Kano Tanyu, no artist has ever been so assiduously copied in Japan as Okio. Forgeries of his works exist in hundreds, but the originals remain always unapproachable.

An eminent critic calls Ganku "stupendous," and describes him as "the only artist of recent times worthy to be ranked on a level with the great masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." Probably not many will be found to confirm that verdict from their own observation. Ganku died just sixty-three years ago (1838). Numbers of his works remain. The

LANDSCAPE IN SEMI-JAPANESE STYLE.

By Hashimoto Gahō. Present time. (See page 68.)



best of them seem to be those that show most clearly the impress of the naturalistic tendency to which Okio so powerfully contributed; but if his countrymen be asked to indicate his title to fame, they invariably refer to his delineations of the tiger. Now it may safely be asserted that Ganku never saw a real, live tiger; never had an opportunity for studying its anatomy and proportions. He formed his own idea of "a snarling, crouching, treacherous mass of energy," and he painted that idea with force and effect, but yet with so little resemblance to nature's original that the distortion of the modelling impairs all appreciation of the essence of the thing. He had, however, seen a tiger's skin, and a tiger's skin is just the kind of texture that lends itself readily to linear representation, and consequently comes within full range of the Japanese artist's brush. Ganku's tiger skins are marvels of brush work. Mori Sosen (born 1747, died 1821), one of the greatest of the *Shi-jo* masters, is as celebrated for his delineations of the monkey as Ganku is for his paintings of the tiger. But Sosen studied the monkey in nature, and acquired an extraordinarily intimate knowledge of its habits and attitudes. He may be called the Landseer of Japan; for though his fame rests chiefly on his pictures of the monkey, he has left paintings of deer, of badgers, of rats, of fishes, and of hares that would have won for him a great reputation even without his remarkable studies of simian life.

The reader will understand that no attempt is here made to separate the *Shijo* and the *Ganku* schools; their differentiation is scarcely a practical problem. He will understand, also, that if special reference is not made in this section to such painters

as Gekkei, Keibun, Hoyen, Kikuchi Yosai, Kōrin and Bunrin, it is for the same reason that has compelled the omission from other sections of any detailed account of the works and styles of scores of other famous masters, from the early Tosa and Kano celebrities to Tani Buncho and Hokusai.

What is the present condition of pictorial art in Japan, and what are its prospects? The former question has been answered more than once in a pessimistic strain. Japan is said to have outlived the manners and customs from which her old art derived vitality, and to have entered upon a phase of existence so permeated with Occidental influences that her artists, like her tailors and her barbers, cannot resist the change. Surely that is a superficial view. It involves the assumption that her art has no elements permanently worthy of preservation, no intrinsic merits fit to survive independently of environment. The fact is that if the present era is without giants of the brush, like Okio or Sosen, it is not without masters of great talent and high technical skill. Twenty years ago, Bunrin died in Kyōtō: an artist of whom it has been well said that he "fixed upon paper and silk with exquisite refinement and suggestiveness the most striking of the atmospheric effects that cast a fairyland glamour over the scenery of Japan." At a yet more recent date died Shōfu Kiyōsai, a *genre* painter of immense versatility, force, and humour, who has left a gallery of pictures showing a wide range of conception and study. Still more recently these strong representatives of the *Shi-jo* and the Popular schools, respectively, were followed to the grave by Ganki, generally known as Chikudo Ganki, who ranks not much below Ganku,

the founder of his school. These three artists are sufficient in themselves to redeem the *Meiji* era from any charge of hopeless decadence. Nor is the present time without painters that will certainly be remembered by posterity. Kawabata Gyokusho, Hashimoto Gaho, Ogata Gekko, Imao Keinen, Taki Katei, Kumagaye Naohiko, Nomura Bunkyo, Watanabe Seitei, and Araki Kwampo, not to speak of others whose talent seems full of promise, make a group of artists inheriting many of the highest qualities of the various schools they represent.

But while the old art flourishes, quietly and steadily enriching the nation with its products, there flourishes also a most pernicious outgrowth of foreign influence, — a great crop of wretched pictures; weak, hurried examples of brush tricks which constitute the sole equipment of the purely conventional copyist. It is not implied that such efforts of mere mechanical dexterity have been suggested by contact with the art of the West. The wave of Western ideas, penetrating, as it has done, to the very heart of the nation, could not fail to be felt in the region of the national art. It has been felt, as will be presently explained. But the comment to be made here — a comment that extends to the whole range of modern Japanese art whether pictorial or applied — is that the mercantile demand resulting from foreign intercourse has created an essentially mercantile supply. Multitudes of people whose purses can never bring objects of Western art within their reach, and who lack either innate taste or educated liking for such things, are tempted by cheapness and novelty to purchase Japanese pictures, and naturally the shrewd trader and the needy draughtsman take care that this undiscriminating

public shall be satisfied. Dozens of studios are devoted to the manufacture of painted parodies which no Japanese connoisseur would regard as pictures, and not a bric-à-brac store is without rolls and albums of weak daubs poured out from these workshops. On the evidence of such paintings it is that the great majority of foreign critics base their estimate of modern Japan's pictorial ability, ignorant that they have before them merely a staple of foreign trade, not an effort of Japanese art.

Apart from this commercial taint, which, after all, is a mere accident, the influx of Western ideas shows itself in two directions: it has called into existence a school based solely and faithfully on the art of the Occident, and it has given new vitality to a school which, while using the old materials and following the old lines, recognises the value of Western principles as to perspective and chiaroscuro, and endeavours to engraft them upon the traditional art of the nation.

Concerning the purely Western school, a few words will suffice. Its students have virtually neither patrons, nor opportunities, nor instructors. There is no place in a Japanese house for their paintings. There are no studios which they can attend, no galleries which they can visit. Their means, with very rare exceptions, are altogether too scanty to permit travel in Europe or America, and at home they are without teachers to guide their hand or examples to educate their eye. Finally, public sentiment is opposed to their radicalism. Yet for thirty years they have struggled with such extraordinary courage and perseverance against these terribly adverse circumstances that it seems impossible to doubt their

MODERN SEMI-JAPANESE SCHOOL.

By Omori Keidō. (See page 68.)



ultimate success, mediocre as have been the results hitherto obtained.

The modern hybrid school has been spoken of above as a revival rather than a new creation. Such a form of speech will perhaps be challenged, for more than one writer of high authority has denied that any marked traces of Western art are visible in Japanese pictures painted before the opening of the country forty years ago. It is admitted that in the field of copperplate engraving some aid was received from the Dutch at the close of the eighteenth century, and that a few of the later artists of the Popular school obeyed the laws of linear perspective; but even such an astute critic and accurate historian as the late Dr. Anderson speaks with surprise of the "want of receptiveness" of Japanese artists, and surmises that it was chiefly due to the low grade of the European pictorial works coming under their observation during the era of restricted foreign intercourse. There is another explanation, — an explanation vividly illustrated in the story of an artist who had hitherto received singularly inadequate notice from foreign essayists. On the 23rd of November in the year 1840 died by his own hand, in Yedo, Watanabe Kwazan. He was a member of the patrician (*shizoku*) order. During the last two decades of his life Japan had begun to turn slowly but surely towards Occidental civilisation. It is customary to speak of the restoration in 1867 as the period when this change of sentiment first made itself distinctly manifest. But the calculation is nearly a century late. Officialdom, indeed, still adhered firmly to the traditional policy of seclusion handed down from the days when the intemperance of Christian propagandists and the jealousies of

warring creeds lent to foreign intercourse a startling and deterrent aspect. But in spite of officialdom, with its iron rule and pitiless penalties, intrepid reformers among the people stealthily studied Occidental systems and with wonderful patience struggled to emerge from the intellectual isolation to which their country had been condemned for more than two centuries. Watanabe was among these pioneers. He fell under suspicion, and his pictures helped to bear witness against him, — eloquent witness, for the talent they displayed could scarcely fail to popularise the heresy they represented. He received the fatal order which every *samurai* was bound to obey unflinchingly, — the order to commit suicide. But his work survived. It would have been more consistent with the heroic methods of those days had every picture painted by him been burned, or buried with his decapitated corpse. That extremity was not resorted to, however, and on the fiftieth anniversary of his death "new Japan" did homage to his memory by bringing together a large collection of his works at the Reigan temple in Tōkyō, and exhibiting them for two days while the priests chaunted litanies and recited masses for the repose of the ill-fated painter's soul. At the edge of the dais supporting the high altar lay an object of sad interest. It was the sword with which Watanabe had committed *seppuku*, and it rested on the same tray of white pine from which the artist had taken it at the supreme moment. Beside it was placed the document written by him on the eve of the final act, — a simply worded and brief confession that he had erred in the sight of the law, and that his transgression involved the further crime of taking the life which he owed to his

parents and ought to have preserved for their sakes. A strangely sounding voice from the past must this have seemed to many of those who had come to burn incense at the painter's tomb, — men in whose memory the events of his last days were still fresh, though the epoch itself might have been centuries removed, so great a change had come over the political complexion of the times. The collection of Watanabe's works comprised many hundred pictures and studies. Of some it would be difficult to speak too highly. The combined vigour and delicacy of their execution, the excellence of their composition, and the life breathing from their lines showed that the anti-foreign prejudices of his era inflicted few heavier losses on the country than the untimely death of such a master. It is not of the purely Japanese pictures, however, that special mention should be made in this context, but rather those showing traces of Western influence. There are many such. The subjects were not distinctly foreign, if some studies of animal life be excepted ; but evidences that the artist had imbibed the spirit of Occidental linear perspective and chiaroscuro were apparent in several pictures, otherwise purely Japanese. This was notably true of a portrait, half-life size, of a well-known Buddhist priest. It might have been painted by a Western artist, and would have done credit to any European brush of Watanabe's era. Is it not easy to understand the reason of the "want of receptivity" to which Dr. Anderson alludes? The penalty of being receptive was out of proportion to the apparent reward. Undoubtedly Hokusai felt the influence obeyed by Kwazan with such fateful results. Many of the works of the great *ukiyo-ye* master bear traces of

foreign methods. But he did not carry this tendency to the length of attracting political censorship. He showed it rather in the undefined though still palpable manner of the modern master Watanabe Seitei, who enjoys in Europe and America the highest, though not, perhaps, the most highly deserved, reputation of any living Japanese artist. The hybrid school of the present day, however, goes far beyond the dubious adaptations of Hokusai or Seitei. It has proposed to itself the same problem that Watanabe Kwazan partially solved sixty years ago, — the problem of preserving the characteristics of Japanese painting while adopting all the technical teachings of the West. Hashimoto Gaho stands at the head of this school. He has talent sufficient to secure partial success for any effort. But if there be any justice in the estimate here set down of the distinctive characteristics of Japanese pictorial art, the conclusion must be that to marry it to the art of the West would be to deprive it of its individuality, and therefore of much of its charm.

Chapter II

JAPANESE APPLIED ART

First Period — From Early Times to the End of the Eighth Century

THERE are proofs that the ancient Japanese attached much importance to industrial occupations. It is not possible, indeed, to speak with confidence as to the quality of their manufactures except in so far as the contents of burial mounds convey information. But history seems to indicate that the early settlers, the progenitors of the Japanese proper, were an industrial people rather than an agricultural; for whereas the records are almost silent on the subject of farming, they contain many references to handicrafts. It would appear that the whole of the people, apart from the administrative and military classes, were engaged solely in industrial pursuits, and that there existed a species of tribal division founded on differences of occupation. Thus the annals speaks of *yuge-be* (bow-makers); *yahagi-be* (arrow-makers); *tatenui-be* (shield-stitchers); *kura-tsukuri-be* (saddlers); *ori-be*, *hatori-be* and *kinu-be* (weavers and tailors); *ko-taukmi* (carpenters); *kanu-be* (blacksmiths); *nuri-be* (lacquerers); *ishi-tsukuri* (stone-cutters); and *hashi-be* (bridge builders). The number and variety of these organisations are alone sufficient to imply a tolerably advanced state of industrial activity, although the skill possessed by the artisans can-

not have been of a uniformly high order. Occupations were hereditary, and it thus resulted that families generally bore the names of the industries they prosecuted. Over each organisation a chief presided, his title being *Tomo-no-Miyatsuko* (corporation master) or *Tomo-no-O* (corporation head). But these artisans evidently did not receive much public consideration. They generally formed part of a noble's household, and occupied there a position not greatly better than that of vassals in whom their patrons enjoyed a right of property. Not until the fifth century of the Christian era were they released from this state of bondage and granted the status of ordinary subjects.

The testimony of written records and that of relics exhumed from sepulchres indicate that the Japanese passed through two periods, a bronze age and an iron age.[1] As to the time when the former commenced, it seems certain that the art of casting bronze, remote as was its origin on the Asiatic continent, did not lie within the knowledge of the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan, but was brought thither by immigrants from the mainland; that is to say, by the progenitors of the Japanese proper. It follows that the oldest bronze castings in Japan do not date from a period more remote than the sixth century, or, perhaps, the seventh before the Christian era, and that no special title to antiquity can be set up on their behalf as compared with corresponding works in various other countries.

On the other hand, if the Japanese cannot claim any distinguished antiquity for their knowledge of the art of bronze casting, they can certainly claim to have escaped any period of art degradation such as that

[1] See Appendix, note 10.

through which Europe passed after the destruction of the Roman Empire. While Occidental nations now in the van of civilisation were still awaiting the impulse from Byzantium which in the middle of the tenth century inspired their earliest achievements in artistic metal work, the Japanese were busily producing many masterpieces of sculpture and metallurgy. The continuity of her artistic capacity thus becomes a notable feature of Japan's story. Her record is practically unbroken, and the progress of her art motives and methods can be studied in uninterrupted series during some fifteen centuries.

Throughout a period of four or five hundred years after the advent of the immigrants mentioned above, bronze apparently continued to be the sole metal used in the country, and the only purposes it served were the manufacture of sword-blades and arrow-tips. Many bronze swords have been found in the barrows which formed the resting-places of the dead in those early ages. They are straight, two-edged weapons, some having a hilt of more or less elaborate workmanship cast in one piece with the blade; others having hafts, or tangs, presumably for passing into wooden hilts. These castings were made in stone moulds, a few of which still survive in Japan, though their antiquity is, of course, a matter of conjecture.[1] Arrow-heads are found associated with the swords, but no ornamental castings of any kind have been discovered, and it may reasonably be conjectured that none such existed.

From about the second century before the Christian era, iron began to be applied to purposes hitherto served by bronze, and, at the same time, evidences

[1] See Appendix, note 11.

are afforded of a higher type of civilisation; for not only are the simple burial barrows of the first settlers replaced by megalithic dolmens and highly specialised forms of chambered tumuli, but also a decorative tendency is displayed in the application of thin sheets of copper, coated with gold, to the handles of swords and to the bits and trappings of horses. From the time when the Japanese learned the uses of iron, they abandoned bronze as a material for sword blades, though they continued to employ it for casting arrowheads. Spears with iron heads were now added to their weapons of war, and they began to cast bronze mirrors (*kagami*) and small bells (*suzu*). Mirrors had their origin abroad; they came either from China or Korea. The form of the imported specimens was a circular disc, with or without a handle, the face polished and quicksilvered, the back covered with decorative designs in relief, the character of which as well as the quality of the casting indicated a degree of artistic and technical skill beyond immediate attainment by the Japanese. But within a brief period these foreign models were rivalled and even surpassed by purely Japanese castings.

As for the bells of that early epoch, they are peculiar objects, without any exact counterpart in foreign countries, so far as is known. Hollow spheroids, with a slight cut in the lower part, they contained a piece of metal, or of some other hard substance, to serve as a tongue; and they were cast in groups of three or five round the rim of a metal plate, having a tang which served to attach it, as an ornamental appendage, to horse trappings, ceremonial robes, or hilts of swords, or to fasten it to a wooden staff which was carried in the hand and shaken so as

WOODEN STATUE OF THE DEITY OF ART.

Sculptor unknown. End of eighth century.



to produce cymbal-like notes. These little bells were often plated with gold, and occasionally they were cast with a decorative design in relief. Their use as pendants for ornamental purposes corresponds with a similar employment of the well-known *maga-tama* (bent jewels), or crescent-shaped pieces of steatite, jasper, quartz, or other stones, which were attached to garments, trappings, musical instruments, and sword-hilts by the ancient Japanese, and of which numerous specimens may be seen in any collection of Far Eastern antiquities.

Among the early iron castings of Japan there are objects whose use remains to this day uncertain. At first sight they suggest the idea of bells, their shape being that of a truncated pyramid, with two ribbon-like flanges running up the sides and arched over the top so as to afford a means of suspension. The surface is usually divided by vertical and horizontal bands in relief, and groups of circular discs protrude from the flanges at regular intervals. There is great variety of dimensions, some being as small as an inch in height, others as large as five and one-half feet; in every case the thinness of the metal is remarkable, — one-sixteenth of an inch, for example, where the height of the object is fifty-four inches and the diameter at the base twenty inches, — and the workmanship indicates considerable skill. These curious objects are found buried in the earth in the provinces of Yamato, Kawachi, and Totomi, localities which help to connect them with the early Japanese immigrants. There are no indications that they served as bells, and the great thinness of the metal is in itself sufficient to preclude that theory. Since, further, they belong to a period prior to the intro-

duction of Buddhism, they cannot be supposed to have been part of temple paraphernalia. Perhaps the most tenable supposition is that they served for the external decoration of the first buildings made in Japan after Chinese models, having been suspended from the corners of the eaves in the manner of the bell-shaped pendants of pagodas. Already in the seventh century of the Christian era they had become antiquities, and it seems natural to infer that the fashion, architectural or otherwise, with which their employment was connected, went out of vogue in the first or second century. Occasionally there are cast upon the surfaces of these bells decorative designs indicating a very crude stage of pictorial art; for example, figures even more rudimentary in outline than the conventional sketches of ancient Egypt.

There is evidence that by the time of the Emperor Nitoku (313–399) considerable skill had been developed in the use of bronze, iron, and gold for decorative purpose. Gold plating was applied with dexterity to bronze and iron alike; decoration not without delicacy and grace appears upon the hilts of swords, and cleverly conceived motives, modelled and chiselled with ability, are seen upon the pommels, — motives indicating that the artists of that early epoch had passed the stage of merely copying natural objects and had learned to conventionalise them. Helmets formed of numerous thin iron plates riveted together and overlaid with gold, had bands of incised ornamentation and peaks chiselled *à jour*, and were altogether objects of fine workmanship, though the incised ornamentation — conventionalised fishes, birds, and animals, enclosed by borders of undulating lines — showed very imperfect command of the graving-

tool, and gave no earnest of the remarkable ability that Japanese artists were destined ultimately to display in this line. Reference must also be made to delicate cable-pattern gold chains with leaf-shaped pendants and pearl ornaments, objects of which the use has not been clearly divined, though the generally received idea is that they were suspended from the helmet. It is thus seen that, on the whole, the Japanese metal-worker of the fourth century was a handicraftsman of no mean skill, though the applications of his art had a narrow range.

The advent of Buddhism in the sixth century introduced a new standard of art conception, though commensurate attainment did not immediately follow. After the year 552 religious statues began to arrive from Korea in some numbers, and these, as well as the bronze images modelled in Japan during the next sixty or seventy years, show sculpture which has not yet fully emerged from its primitive stage. Not only are traces of the chisel shallow and uncertain, but the facial expression of the deities and their poses are mechanical and lifeless. It is easy to see that the tools available were rudimentary, the sculptor apparently being provided with nothing better than a straight chisel. The relationship of these statues to the rude stone-images of early and mediæval Japan is unmistakable. There is in both alike the same geometrically formal disposition of the drapery, offering no suggestion of the great skill subsequently acquired by Japanese sculptors in the representation of still life, and the method of construction is that practised by the metal-workers of all countries in the initial stage of their art, namely, casting or beating by the *repoussé* process into the required

shape two thin plates of metal, one for the back, the other for the front, of the projected figure, and subsequently riveting them together at the edges. Many examples of a similar style of workmanship are seen in Korea, and confirmation is thus incidentally furnished of the tradition which assigns to Korean artists the credit of having been Japan's original instructors in the sculpture of religious images. Yet no name of any of these Korean teachers has been preserved. The first sculptor mentioned in Japanese annals is Shiba Tachito, a Chinese *immigré*, who is said to have come to Japan in the year 560 A. D., and to have received from the Emperor the title of *kuratsukuri no obito*, or head architect. His son, Shiba Tasu-na, succeeded to the office, and it is recorded that many sacred effigies were chiselled in wood either by these artists thenselves or under their instruction. They also superintended the building of Buddhist temples which, though solid and imposing edifices, did not, at that remote era, receive the wealth of interior decoration in glyptic work, lacquering and painting, for which Buddhist places of worship subsequently became remarkable. No authenticated specimens of sculpture by either Shiba Tachi-to or Shiba Tasu-na are now in existence, but from the time of Shiba Tori, grandson of Shiba Tachi-to, credible examples survive. This sculptor, generally known as Tori *Busshi*, attained extraordinary fame. His skill, which seems to have completely overshadowed that of his contemporaries or predecessors, receives from posterity a significant tribute, namely, that every fine carving possessing any claim to great antiquity is habitually ascribed to him by ignorant people, and some have not even hesitated to regard him as the painter of

a fine example of mural decoration at the temple Horyu-ji, though such a theory is untenable. History first speaks of Shiba Tori in connection with three images which he carved in wood to order of the Emperor Yomei, in the year 586 A. D.; namely, an effigy of Shaka, sixteen feet high, with two attendant Bodhisattvas of smaller dimensions. These were placed in a temple specially built for their reception at Minabuchi, the temple and the images being an offering to invoke heaven's healing grace for the sick Sovereign. No vestige of these sculptures remains. Shiba Tori is also said to have chiselled many wooden images to order of the Emperor Yomei's son, Prince Shotoku—remembered by posterity as Shotoku Taishi. Shotoku never came to the throne. He filled the post of regent during the reign of the Empress Suiko (563–628). The earliest Japanese historiographer and Buddhist commentator, he left an unequalled reputation for learning, piety, and statesmanship, and among all the factors making for the spread of Buddhism in that era, his influence had probably most efficacy. Many sculptures in wood, said to be from his chisel, are preserved at various places in Japan, but there is reason to think that a majority of them are apocryphal. One, however, is regarded as authentic by connoisseurs. It is a statue of Kwannon, the goddess of mercy, six and a half feet high, its comparatively defective technique redeemed by considerable grace of pose and passionless refinement of feature. Shiba Tori's work, of which fully authenticated examples are preserved in the temple Horiu-ji, betrays greatly inferior development of artistic instinct, his images being squat, ill-proportioned, and deficient in dignity. They are apparently Chinese modifications of Indian

types. Contrasted with these figures, Shotoku's Kwannon shows that already at this early period Japanese genius had begun to break away from the mechanical formalism of Korea. On the other hand, as might be expected from the evidence of objects found in dolmens, the decorative metal work of Prince Shotoku's time is of a more advanced character than the sculptor's art. The halos of sacred effigies and the ornaments attached to objects of temple furniture or used for the decoration of the temples themselves, show considerable skill in chiselling *à jour* as well as in *repoussé*, and the designs indicate an already advanced conception of decorative motives as well as a just sense of proportion and orderly arrangement. Notable among illustrative specimens is a pendant of gilt bronze destined originally to hang from the ceiling of the temple Horiu-ji. It is 6.96 metres long, and consists of six sections united by hinges, each section having a pierced design of plants, flowers, clouds, and emblems, the whole constituting a fine piece of decorative work.

From the second half of the seventh century progress became very marked, and, at the same time, the character of the sculpture suggests emancipation from Korean influence and closer approach to Chinese, with evident elements of Indian style, as is understood by recalling that China under the Tang dynasty had very intimate relations with India. The history of the epoch furnishes an explanation of these changes, for it tells that Japan's intercourse with China became altogether direct without any Korean intervention. But although, on the one hand, the sculptor evidently feels Indo-Grecian inspiration, although the winged steeds and griffins of Assyria

make their appearance in decorative schemes, as do also conventionalised plants and foliage, especially the acanthus, and although the wide inter-relations of Asiatic countries and their occasional contact even with Greece and Rome find evident expression, on the other hand, the realistic and grace-loving genius of the Japanese begins to show itself very distinctly. Many authenticated relics of the period survive. They indicate a development of technical skill scarcely credible by comparison with the rudimentary essays of the preceding cycle, and they indicate also a conception of majestic beauty wholly unpredicted by any examples of earlier statuary, except, perhaps, the Kwannon of Prince Shotoku. It is to this epoch that posterity owes two groups of bronze statues justly regarded with admiration. One is the three Amidas of Koriu-ji; the other Yakushi and his two acolytes in the temple Yakushi-ji. Comparatively small figures, — 0.32 metre in height, — the central effigy of the three Amidas is seated, the two others stand on lotus flowers, the stalks of which rise from a dais having for background a reredos on which Buddhist figures are cast in medium relief. This remarkably graceful and beautiful object is technically far superior to anything of the previous epoch, and the majestically benign repose that pervades the figures belongs to a high range of artistic conception. It is known that these statues were executed by order of Tachibana, spouse of the Emperor Tenchi (668–671), but the name of their artist has not been preserved. The Yakushi group is of even greater excellence. Its central figure (Bhaichadjya-guru) — 4.25 metres in height — is seated on a dais, also of bronze, the faces of which have demons cast in relief

and the borders are decorated with dragons, swans, phœnixes, tortoises, serpents, and vine-scrolls. The Sun and Moon effigies stand on either side. They measure 3.94 metres with the lotus flowers that form their pedestals. There is no question about the essentially Grecian type of the faces of this group; and the spirit and vigour of the work show that the wave of Occidental culture which flowed into China during the period of the Six Dynasties reached Japan also and found there more faithful interpreters than those of China herself. A popular fallacy, endorsed by more than one writer, describes the materials of these figures as *shakudo*, — an ebony-like compound peculiar to Japan, — but *shakudo* had not yet been invented; the images are of dark bronze.

The statues of this period are no longer composed of two *repoussé* plates fastened together at the edges: they are cast by the *cire-perdue* process. In the preceding epoch earthen moulds were used, but the Japanese had now become acquainted with the incomparably more effective method of a wax shell. That alone constitutes a remarkable advance in technical knowledge, — an advance made, doubtless, under Chinese instruction, — and the statues described above show further that the users of the chisel had become very skilled, all the details of the figures themselves, of the drapery, and of the accessories being worked out forcibly and with artistic feeling.

The only sculptors of this period whose names are remembered are Oguchi, Kimara, Yakushi, and Kanashi, but as none of their works has been identified, little interest attaches to the names.

Early Japanese sculpture reached its first culminating period in the eighth century; that is to say, the

century immediately subsequent to the era of Tori, Ouchi, Shotoku, and the unknown modellers of the three Amidas and the Yakushi Trinity just described. Among the masters who illumined this golden era the names are recorded of Gyogi, a Buddhist priest immortalised by his contributions to every branch of material progress in his time; Hien Wantsz, whose nationality is uncertain, some calling him a Korean, some an Indian, and some a Chinese; Kimimaro, the founder of a colossal effigy of Buddha, the well-known "Nara Dai-Butsu," which stands in the temple Todai-ji; the three artists, Takaichi Makuni, Takaichi Mamaro, and Kakino Moto-no-Otoma, who assisted Kimimaro in his great work, and finally, two brothers, Keibunkai and Keibunkomi, generally known in their time as the Kasuga sculptors, since they came from a district called Kasuga-mura.

Speaking broadly, the eighth century is remembered by Japanese students as the "Nara epoch," because the custom previously observed of changing the capital with each change of sovereign was abandoned at the beginning of that century, and Nara continued to be the residence of the Court through seven generations. Comparatively little is known of the Nara Palace, though many of the articles and ornaments used by its inmates survive in a celebrated collection which during nearly twelve hundred years has been preserved in a storehouse connected with the Shōsō-in at that place. But some of the seven massive and beautiful temples erected in the days of the city's greatness stand still intact, and their graceful proportions, together with the sculptures and paintings they contain, speak eloquently of a refined and even luxurious civilisation. Nothing is more re-

markable about the Nara epoch than the vigorous growth of the Buddhist creed. Throughout the reign of all the Sovereigns that held their Court there, no expenditure was thought excessive in the service of religion. All the artistic resources of the time were devoted to the embellishment and furnishing of the temples. The priests attached so much importance to art as a means of appealing to the emotional side of human nature, that several of the greatest among them were themselves skilled painters and sculptors, contributing even more to the material and artistic development of their time than to its moral elevation. It may, indeed, be truly said, that the spread of Buddhism was synchronous with the rise of art and science in Japan. Carpenters, from the practice acquired in building temples, learned how to construct large edifices; sculptors and metallurgists became skilful by casting or graving idols of bronze, wood, and gold; painting, decorative weaving, the ornamentation of utensils, and the illumination of missals owed their expert achievement to the patronage and instruction of Buddhist monks; almost the first real impetus given to the potter's art is associated with the name of a priest, — in short, nearly every branch of industrial and artistic development stood more or less indebted to the influence of the creed. It is impossible to endorse the verdict of Japanese critics when they hold Buddhism responsible for decadence and retrogression which in reality marked, not the evil effects of the creed itself or of its propagandism, but a temporary diminution of its beneficent influence. Many abuses grew out of the arrogance, avarice, and ambition of the priests towards the close of the Nara epoch,

but nothing could efface the work they had already achieved.

In his conception of an ancient Japanese Imperial city like Nara, the reader must not be guided by Western models. He must not imagine a vast agglomeration of buildings, warehouses, stores, theatres, residences, hotels, and so forth, from which the Palace is separated by its surrounding park. He must rather conceive two entirely independent towns: the one composed of lowly wooden cottages, clustered closely together and sheltering an industrious, cheerful, but profoundly humble population; the other an assemblage of structures colossal by comparison, the temples of the gods, looking out upon beautiful landscapes, and sheltered by hills that slope softly downward to crystal lakes, forest glades, and parterres of glowing blossom. In this second, or sacred, city stood the Palace, and the gulf that divided the quietly toiling plebeians in the one quarter from the nobles and courtiers in the other was bridged only by the benevolence and philanthropy of the Buddhist priests. To be prosperous in business here, to be relieved hereafter from the pain of perpetual inferiority, — these were the blessings that the commoner associated with piety, while for the upper classes it meant successful sway, victory in arms, and prosperity.

One notable result of this religious fervour was that the sculptor's chisel found perpetual employment in producing images for the seven great temples erected at Nara and for other scarcely less important edifices in the surrounding provinces. The art of sculpture thus reached its apogee in fertility of conception and beauty of execution. Hundreds of specimens survive from the epoch, and it becomes possible to speak of

its productions with considerable confidence. The proportions of the various figures, their attitudes and their draperies show great fidelity of observation; the faces have a character of combined majesty and serenity; the technique is generally excellent, and the artists have succeeded in effecting a happy union of idealism and realism. Wood carvings of really fine type make their appearance now for the first time, and the epoch is also remarkable not only for colossal castings such as no other Oriental country has produced, but also for statues in clay and in dry lacquer.

The clay statues, sun-dried, not baked in a furnace, were modelled on a wooden core wrapped in straw which carried a coating of earth and boiled rice. For the surface work the material employed was potter's clay and talc, and to the finished figure colours were applied. It is not improbable that the idea of such a method was suggested by the *cire-perdue* process of casting. But although very fine results were obtained during the Nara epoch, modelling in clay was not much practised in later times, and ultimately the fashion became limited to keramists and puppet-makers.

The dry-lacquer process presented many difficulties and demanded great care. Two methods are described by Japanese writers. In one, the upper part of the statue having been modelled in clay, a hollow mould was taken from it, and into this was poured a coating of fine lacquer destined to form the outside of the figure. Into the interior, lacquer of gradually increasing thickness was run in layers, and the statue, having been ultimately drawn from the mould, was overlaid with a composition of incense, leaves, and bark of the *Illicium religiosum* (*shikimi*),

dried and reduced to powder, decayed earth from the bed of a pond, and potter's clay. The head and torso thus constructed were then fixed on a wooden frame wrapped in cloth, and finally the arms and legs, having been modelled independently, were fastened in position with lacquer. The second method was much simpler. In this the sculptor commenced by chiselling a statue in wood, to which he applied a coat of tolerably coarse lacquer, and then a layer of cotton material, on which, finally, a coat of fine lacquer was superposed. Delicate work was not possible by this second process.

At the head of all the sculptures of the eighth century it is usual to place a huge bronze image of Lochāna Buddha, known as the "Nara Dai-Butsu." It certainly deserves that distinction in some respects, for it is fifty-three feet high, and the difficulty of making such a casting must have been immense. But however beautifully proportioned the colossal idol may have been originally, clumsy restorations in the sequel of conflagrations and other accidents have so marred it that it can no longer be compared with many smaller examples of contemporary sculpture. The intellectual energy and technical resources of the artist that conceived and executed such a work command admiration, but the measure of artistic success he attained is now a matter of conjecture only. Other specimens of the time convey fuller information. A series of clay statuettes preserved in the temple Hōryu-ji show, in a very marked degree, evidence of the humour for which Japanese sculpture became famous many hundred years subsequently; humour which is conspicuously absent in the works of China and Korea alike. On a much higher plane of art,

however, stand four clay statues of the Deva Kings, which are among the treasured relics of Tōdai-ji. Trampling on the demons they have subdued, the faces of the four Devas display four different phases of combat, from fierce defiance and strong effort to stern resolve and calm triumph; their attitudes are modelled in consonance with these moods; the details of their armour and costume are skilfully rendered, and their proportions betray no anatomical errors. Even greater force of conception is attributed by Japanese connoisseurs to a clay statue of Shikongō (Vadjrapāni), belonging also to the gallery of the eighth century and kept in the same temple, Tōdai-ji. This statue has suffered much from the effects of time, and the condition of its right arm greatly impairs the general effect; but such as it is, it certainly deserves much of the praise bestowed on it since the public began to discover that early Japanese statuary merits attention. Among eighth-century works in dry lacquer, undoubtedly the most notable are the Hokke-do Trinity, by the priest Rōben. These figures present a marked contrast to the four Devas and the Shikongō mentioned above. Brahma and Indra, whose effigies form the acolytes of the group, are shown in an attitude of prayer, the expression of the faces majestically and profoundly serene, and even the folds of their garments modelled so as to accentuate the idea of passionless piety. A wide interval separated these figures from the conventional Indian deity which threatened at first to impose its type upon the Japanese sculptor. There is here nothing whatever of the curiously modelled torso, the massive sensuous cast of features, and the jewelled tiara which some of the earliest Japanese sculptures

recall. The one fault is excessive breadth of shoulders and consequent lack of grace. As to statues carved in wood, the most celebrated is that of the Eleven-faced Kwannon preserved in the temple Hokke-ji. Nine of the eleven faces form a circlet for the head of the goddess, and are divided into groups of three, one group smiling, the second ironical, and the third gentle; and placed above them all is a somewhat larger head breathing perfect calm. There has been attributed to this statue extreme beauty of composition and execution; but the very obvious faults of ill-proportioned limbs, a squat figure, and somewhat clumsily chiselled drapery disqualify the statue for such applause. It shows, indeed, little superiority to the bronze Kwannon of Yakushi-ji, cast about a century earlier.

If any confident judgment may be based on the articles in the Shōsō-in collection, it would appear that the applied art of Japan had already reached a high stage of development in the eighth century. The collection comprises more than three thousand specimens, — bells, swords, mirrors, desks, musical instruments, censers, objects of virtu, articles of costume, chess-boards, vases, glass utensils, tissues, paintings, books, and reliquaries. Many of them exhibit workmanship of remarkable delicacy and skill; so much so that a certain measure of credulity is required on the part of any one attributing them to Japanese artists and artisans. Yet when, in the year 756, the Emperor Shomu donated a majority of these objects to the temple Tōdai-ji, they were accompanied by a list in which it was recorded that several swords and screens were Chinese and that a reliquary and a screen were Korean, the inference obviously suggested being

that all the rest were Japanese. If that deduction be warranted, the Japanese of the eighth century could do these things: they could sculpture metal delicately and minutely, using a number of chisels and burins, and thus showing a long step of progress from the sixth-century time of few and ineffective implements; they could inlay metals with mother-of-pearl and amber; they could apply *cloisonné* decoration to objects of gold, the cloisons being of silver and somewhat clumsy; they could work skilfully in lacquer, black, and golden; they could encrust gold with jewels; they could chisel metal in designs *à jour* or in the round, both with much skill; they could cast bronze by the *cire-perdue* process, showing detailed work as clear as though it had been finished with the chisel; they could encrust wood with ivory, plain or coloured, and inlay it with mother-of-pearl, gold, or silver; they could weave rich brocades; they could paint decorative or pictorial designs on wood, overlaying them with translucid varnish which preserved the colours fresh for centuries; and they could manufacture coloured glass. The difficulty which the student encounters in assigning these beautiful objects to Japanese artists is that in not one instance do the decorative designs bear a purely Japanese character, and that in many instances they are essentially Chinese, Indian, or Persian. It is of course conceivable that Japanese decorative artists may not yet have emerged from the copying stage, and that they borrowed motives frankly and faithfully from foreign sources. But, on the other hand, if these objects had been of native production, would the Nara Court have placed them among the treasures of the principal temple? It seems more reasonable to believe

WOODEN STATUE OF MANJUSRI.

The renowned Bodhisattva. By Unkei. 1180-1220.



that they were rare articles of foreign *provenance*, and that they indicate nothing beyond the refined taste of the Japanese of that epoch.

Two specimens of art workmanship may, however, be specially referred to as indisputably illustrative of eighth-century Japanese skill. One is a gong framed in the coils of four dragons, which rise from entwining a pillar poised on the back of a Dog of Fo, the whole in bronze; the other is a richly lacquered drum, set in a frame of gilt bronze chiselled *à jour* in a design of dragons and phœnixes, and surmounted by a radiant sun. The Japanese obtained the dragon and the Dog of Fo (*shishi*) from China, as well as the idea of using the latter by way of pedestal; but there are points about this beautifully designed bronze gong which prove its Japanese *provenance*, and the central decorative scheme on the lacquered drum — a triple combination of the male and female principles — is essentially Japanese. To the makers of such objects a high degree of artistic and technical attainment must be conceded, though there is not sufficient reason to credit them with the varied exercise of skill shown by the Shōsō-in specimens.

Among Japanese commentators and antiquarians there is a tendency, followed by several foreign students also, to detect strong traces of Chinese and Korean influence in the works described above, and even to attribute some of the best of them to Korean or Chinese sculptors. But before accepting such a theory this question has to be answered: If a Korean or a Chinese expert working in Japan before the close of the eighth century was capable of modelling figures like the four Deva Kings and the Brahma of Tōdai-ji, why did none of the numerous Chinese and

Korean sculptors who worked to meet the demands of the Buddhist religion in their own countries, succeed in producing a single masterpiece comparable with these effigies? Tradition is so confident about the debt owed by Japan's artists to the neighbouring continental countries that the broad fact may not be doubted, especially as there are internal evidences of its partial truth. But the amount of the borrowing is open to query. It is contrary to the suggestions of reason or the teachings of precedent that countries supposed to have been the parents and teachers of a particular art as well as the fields of its earnest exercise through long centuries, should not be able to show any products of that art corresponding with the admirable examples attributed to their emigrant experts working under alien patronage in a neighbouring island. Such was not the case in the field of pictorial art, nor yet in that of keramics, nor yet in that of textile fabrics, and the apparent inference with regard to sculpture is that, though the Japanese obtained technical instruction from their continental neighbours, and motives from the creed which the latter were instrumental in propagating, their own genius soon carried the practice of the art beyond the range of Chinese or Korean conception.

Before pursuing the historical sequence of the development of the sculptor's art in Japan, some special subjects must be briefly discussed.

The chiselling of stone images was practised by the Japanese from an early period of their art history, but it does not seem possible to determine with even approximate accuracy the date when this class of work had its origin. Nor is there much to encourage research. Japanese sculptures in stone have always

been of very mediocre quality, not for an instant supporting comparison with the studies in marble bequeathed to the world by the ancient Greeks. Should time have in store for Japan vicissitudes such as overtook the prehistoric world of the West, it is not difficult to imagine that some race of explorers, thirty or forty centuries hence, discovering the stupendous masonry and the huge granite blocks of the Tōkyō and Ōsaka castles, may draw an inference similar to that suggested by the ruins of Tirynth and its sister cities of Argolis, and may conclude that Japan was once inhabited by a race of giants. But they certainly will not find anything to suggest that the men who applied granite to such colossal uses understood the value of the imperishable material suggested by Nature herself as a medium for transmitting artistic conceptions to posterity. The most reasonable explanation of the inferiority shown by the Japanese in this respect is that the quality of the stone generally available in their country defied any fine exercise of glyptic skill. Japan is not without stores of good marble, which are now beginning to be successfully utilised for purposes of sculpture. But in remote ages their existence does not appear to have been suspected, and the artist, being supplied only with granite and coarse sandstone, was not encouraged to attempt work inconsistent with the quality of the material. Some critics maintain, indeed, that the technical difficulties attending sculpture in stone proved insuperable to the Japanese. But such a theory can scarcely be reconciled with the singular ability they showed in bringing still more refractory substances within artistic control. Further, the evidence furnished by their ancient tombs shows that, in

times as remote as the beginning of the Christian era, they knew how to hew stones and join them into the forms of sarcophagi, so perfect in shape that some of them, when exhumed in later epochs, were regarded as palanquins in which demigods had ridden, or as boats in which they had sailed the seas during the age of Japan's government by divine beings. Still more conclusive proof of ability to fashion stone into given shapes is afforded by objects for personal adornment found in these tombs, — carved jewels (*maga-tama*) of agate or jadeite; tubular jewels (*kuda-tama*) of light green stone; hexagonal jewels (*kiriko-dama*), and triple-ring jewels (*mitsuwa-dama*) of quartz; and already in the fourth century of the Christian era, one of the sections of artificers employed by the Government had the name of *Tama-tsukuri-be*, or sculptors of ornamental minerals. In the face of these facts it is impossible to doubt that the cutting, shaping, and polishing of stone fell well within the competence of Japanese artisans in very early times, and that had they recognised it as a material suitable for sculpturing objects of high art, technical difficulties would not have deterred them.

In China and Korea the custom of erecting huge memorial tablets of marble or granite existed in ancient ages. But the Japanese were slow to adopt it, and never reconciled themselves to the use of ornamental sculpture on such objects. History contains a poem attributed to that personage of somewhat apocryphal achievements, the Empress Jingo (201–269 A. D.), in which words occur indicating apparently that a stone monument was set up to the deity Sukuna. But the first unequivocal record of stone sculpture is found in the annals of the Emperor Keitei's reign

(507–531 A. D.), when there flourished in Chikushi a local magnate remarkable for his extravagant style of life and ultimately for rebelling against the Imperial authority. It is stated that he adopted the Chinese custom of causing a grand tomb to be erected for himself, and that he collected a number of skilled workers in stone for the purpose. Encircling and guarding the tomb were placed sixty stone effigies of warriors each seven feet high and each with a stone shield planted beside him. In a recess on the south of the tomb a figure was set up representing a judge, before whom a naked culprit kneeled to receive sentence for stealing four wild-boars, which also were sculptured in the same material, and close at hand stood three horses with a background of two stone edifices. Some traces of this elaborate monument remain, but even in their complete absence the record is sufficiently explicit to show that the chiselling of natural objects in stone was understood at that remote time, though the manner of applying the art was alien, and its products were probably very crude. Moreover, after the abolition of the barbarous customs of burying alive the chief vassals of a prince or noble at the time of his interment, — a reform effected at about the commencement of the Christian era, — images of stone were sometimes used as substitutes for these living sacrifices, though in ordinary cases rudely shaped effigies of sun-dried clay were deemed sufficient. Excavations recently made near the tumulus of the Emperor Kimmei (540–571 A. D.) brought to light a number of stone images of men and animals, and similar objects have been found buried at other places under circumstances which suggest great antiquity. But not one of the specimens hitherto found

indicates that the sculptor aimed at beauty of form or accuracy of proportion, and it need scarcely be added that none of them had any direct connection with religious rites, for the deities of the *Shinto* cult, which alone prevailed in Japan in those times, were never represented in effigy. In comparatively modern eras, when it became the habit to erect over the resting-places of the dead handsome bronze monuments and to surround them with stone fences, the chisels of great glyptic artists were sometimes employed to cut upon the pedestals of these monuments, or on the panels of gates giving access to their enclosures, scenes of religious import, such as the entry of Buddha into Nirvana or episodes from the careers of the Arhats. But these were quite exceptional applications of glyptic art.

The use of stone for sculpturing Buddhist idols commenced in the reign of the Emperor Bidatsu when (585 A.D.) two envoys whom he had sent to Korea brought back a stone effigy of the Buddhist deity, Miroku. From that time, whenever images had to be erected in the open air, stone seems to have suggested itself as a suitable material, and the traveller in Japan often sees, set up by the roadside or enshrined at the elbow of a mountain track, little stone images of Jizo (K'shitigarbha), the protecting deity of wayfarers, the gentle god who encourages unhappy children in purgatory to pile up pebbles until the heap shall be high enough to raise them to the plains of the blessed. Scarcely less frequent are effigies of foxes seated on pedestals before the rustic shrine of Inari, the god of food, where the peasant prays for rich harvests. But none of these objects deserves attention as a specimen of sculpture. They

are mere suggestions. Eloquence of form did not enter into the thought of the humble mason that hewed them, nor, indeed, did their purpose or their surroundings usually encourage any fine effort of art.

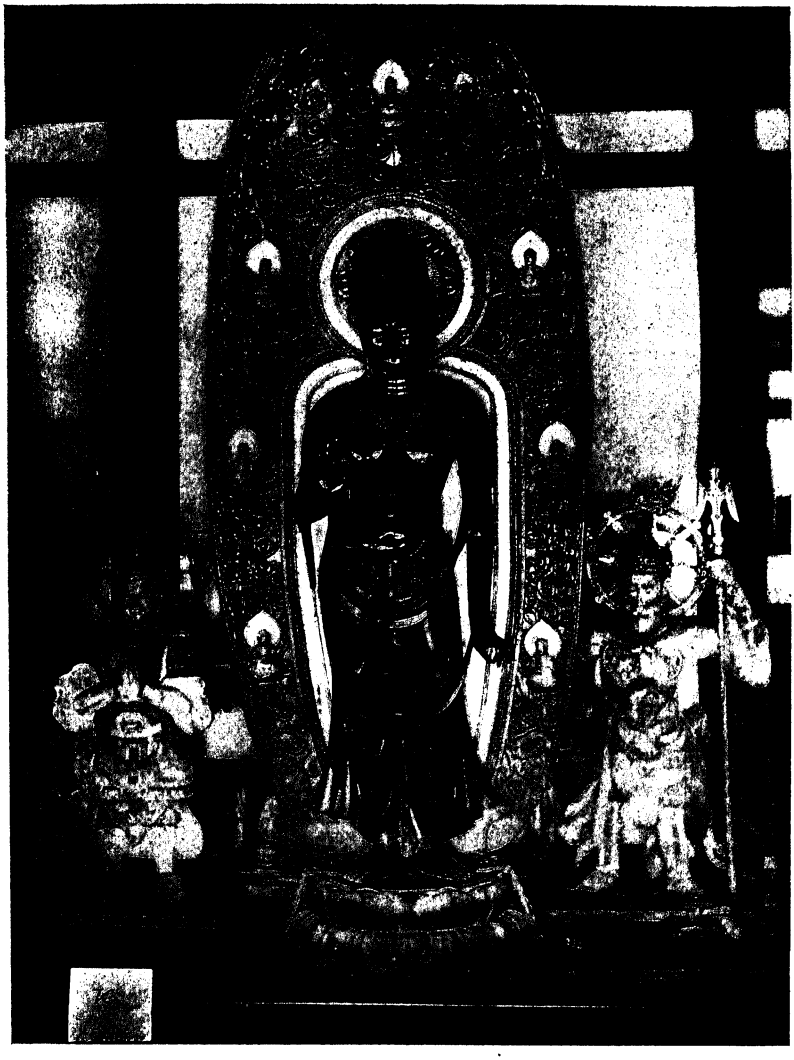
The perception of the Japanese is nothing if not congruous. He has an instinctive sense of the fitness of things within his own range of experience, and it would seem to him a solecism to erect a delicately chiselled, elaborately ornamented image among the mosses and shadows of a forest or the dust and contamination of a roadside. When, however, a stone carving was destined to form part of the entourage of an important temple or mausoleum, greater care was bestowed on its modelling. It then usually took the form of the *Kara-shishi* (Chinese lion, i. e. Dog of Fo), to which the Japanese sculptor often succeeds in imparting an aspect of much vigour and vitality.

The Emperor Gotoba, in the year 1187, had a pair of stone *shishi* chiselled to stand inside the inner gate of the temple Todai-ji at Nara, and effigies of two Bodhisattvas and the four Heavenly Kings, also in stone, to stand within the building. It is recorded that he entrusted the execution of this work to a Chinese sculptor, Lo Ku, who was assisted by three Japanese. Lo pointed out that the stone procurable in Japan was not fitted for the purpose of fine sculpture, and the Emperor caused stone to be imported from China at a cost of about £3,000.

There are preserved in a cave at the back of the temple Nippon-ji, in Awa province, fifty-three stone effigies of Buddhas, said to have been sculptured in the days of the Emperors Shomu (724–748 A. D.) and Heizei (806–809 A. D.), and these were supplemented, in

BRONZE STATUE OF THE MOON DEVA (GEKKO).

In the Temple Yakushi-ji at Nara. Sculptor unknown. End of seventh century.



antiquities; they indicate a decorative sense by no means rudimentary on the part of their makers and users. Many of the mirrors thus preserved are unquestionably Chinese, and others are frank copies of Chinese models, while all are so much alike that doubts have been raised as to the possibility of distinguishing their *provenance*, or of confidently attributing any of them to Japanese workers. That objection might be serious had there not been found in ancient Japanese tombs mirrors having attached to their circumference bells of the bivalve, tongueless kind peculiar to Japan, whereas nothing similar has ever been found in China or Korea. It may therefore be assumed that ability to manufacture such objects existed at an early date in Japan, though the source of inspiration was doubtless Chinese. Briefly described, the mirror was a bronze disc, having one side polished or quick-silvered as a reflector and the other ornamented with designs in relief.[1] The metal varied considerably in composition. Its principal ingredients were copper and tin, the former constituting from seventy-five to ninety-five per cent, the latter from twenty-three to one-half per cent. Lead was frequently present, with occasional mixture of silver and traces of gold.

From the remarkable cleanness of casting shown by some of these mirrors, it has been inferred that the *cire-perdue* process was employed by their makers. But that is exceedingly doubtful. As to the reflecting surface, though probably obtained at first by polishing alone, it soon came to be coated with an amalgam of tin and quicksilver, and as Japan had no quicksilver of her own, she must have had recourse to China, or

[1] See Appendix, note 12.

to Korea, China's pupil. The same information is furnished by the gilding and silvering found on copper plates which formed decorative adjuncts of sword-hilts and horse-trappings from the beginning of the iron age (200 B.C.). Hence it may be affirmed on the evidence furnished by relics of art industry that, in the first or second century before the Christian era, Japan was in contact with Chinese or Korean civilisation, and that she learned from one of her continental neighbours the process of obtaining reflective surfaces by means of mercury.[1]

The Japanese mirror attracted much attention at one time among foreigners, owing to a curious property it sometimes possessed, namely, that the pattern on the back was reflected by the polished surface in front. The effect was best seen by double reflection, — that is to say, when light cast on the surface of the mirror was reflected on some other flat surface. So strange did this feature seem that it received the epithet "magical," and for many years it was considered the "correct thing" that every collector should include a Japanese "magic mirror" among his treasures. Of course the Japanese themselves knew that their mirror possessed this property, but they did not understand it and did not indulge in many conjectures about a phenomenon which seemed inexplicable. So soon, however, as the scientist of the West approached the problem, he discovered a simple solution. It is a structural accident. When a mirror, laid face upwards, is subjected to pressure by the hand of the artisan polishing its surface, it necessarily rests on the salient points of the arabesque or other design that decorates the reverse,

[1] See Appendix, note 13.

and the portions of the face lying in the interstices of these points become more or less depressed, so that light falling on the surface is broken up and unevenly reflected. Dr. Anderson has suggested that the "magical" feature has another explanation; namely, that the contraction of the fused metal when cooling in the mould was influenced by the comparative thickness or thinness due to the convexities and concavities of the pattern. That is probable enough, but it has been demonstrated by experiment that the property in question can be produced at will, by a process founded on the former theory. The Japanese, whether manufacturers or users of these mirrors, never regarded their freaks of reflection as an admirable quality, and Western virtuosi might wisely adopt the same attitude towards the phenomenon.

Japan's temple bells deserve notice for many reasons, — not the bell-like objects of thin cast iron found buried in the ground in certain provinces, objects whose purpose has never been clearly ascertained, but the bronze bells actually used as such from the eighth century onward. The metallic voices that summon worshippers in the West can seldom be counted sounds of gentleness and harmony. Even cathedral carillons of Europe and America have too often a clash and a clang little suggestive of "the peace that passeth understanding." But the *tsuri-gane* (suspended bell) of Japan gives forth a voice of the most exquisite sweetness and harmony — a voice that enhances the lovely landscapes and seascapes, across which the sweet solemn notes come floating on autumn evenings and in the stillness of summer's noonday hazes. The song of these bells can never be forgotten by those that have once heard it. Their

notes seem to have been born amid the eternal restfulness of the Buddhist paradise, and to have gathered, on their way to human ears, echoes of the sadness that prepares the soul for Nirvana. Some of them are giants among bells. The Sanjusangen-do in Kyōtō, where stand the 33,333 images of the Goddess of Mercy, has a bell fourteen feet high, nine feet in diameter, ten and three-fourths inches thick, and weighing fifty-six tons. It was cast in the beginning of the seventeenth century. At the temple Chion-in, in the same city, there is a bell ten feet ten inches high, nine feet in diameter, nine and one-half inches thick, and weighing forty-three tons. It was cast in the year 1633. Still older than either of these — the oldest bell in Japan indeed — is that of Tōdai-ji at Nara. Cast in 732 A. D., it is twelve feet nine inches high, eight feet ten inches in diameter, ten inches thick, and its weight is forty-nine tons. At innumerable places throughout the country, bells of smaller but still noble proportions toll the passing hours or summon the people to special services. But they are never heard at funerals. The glory and credit of having cast these wonderful bells belong exclusively to the Japanese, for though they took the shape originally from China, they soon surpassed her in the size and quality of their castings. Peking boasts a bell cast in 1406, by order of the great Ming Emperor Yung-lo. It was long supposed to be the biggest bell in the world by persons ignorant of the Tsar Kolokol and its smaller sister at Moscow. The Peking bell weighs fifty-three tons, and is therefore four tons heavier than the Nara bell, but the latter was cast six hundred and seventy-four years earlier than the former. The second biggest bell of

China — that of Nanking — weighs only twenty-two tons, a size reached and surpassed by numerous bells in Japan. Dimensions apart, however, there is absolutely no comparison in the matter of beauty and grandeur of tone between the bells of China, the teacher, and those of Japan, the pupil. In what kind of esteem the notes of a really fine bell are held by the Japanese may be gathered from the fact that among the "Eight Beauties" (*Hak-kei*) of the celebrated Lake Biwa, the sound of the evening bell of Mii-dera stands fourth. Some have sought the secret of the Japanese bell's sweetness in the method of ringing; that is to say, not with a clapper, — metal clashing against metal, — but with a beam of wood swung horizontally so as to strike a boss on the outer surface of the bell. That may contribute to the result, but cannot, of course, be the reason of it. An eminent writer, discussing the bells of Europe, says that as celebrated violins — an Amati or a Stradivarius — are the outcome of innumerable experiments, extending over centuries, so the "perfect" bells of Holland, cast by the masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "disengaged themselves after ages of empirical trials as the true models, and supplied the finished type for all succeeding bell-workers." The rules thus evolved and still implicitly obeyed were that the metal should be a mixture of copper and tin in the proportion of 4 to 1, that the thickness of the bell's edge should be one-fifteenth of its diameter, and that its height should be twelve times its thickness. Every one of these rules was ruthlessly violated by the founders of Japanese bells. As to the composition of the bell metal, there does not seem to have been any accurate formula. The

great Tōdai-ji bell is said to have been made of copper and tin in the proportion of 36 to 1, but the record is probably an approximation only. It is at all events certain that no care was taken to maintain any hard-and-fast ratio of mixture in later times. The casting of a temple bell constituted a species of festival. People thronged from all parts of the parish, carrying offerings, mirrors, and other metal ornaments, which were thrown into the melting-pots without any question as to the nature of the metal composing them. Not infrequently copper coins supplied the chief, if not the only, material. Thus, for a bell cast at Kamakura in the thirteenth century, 330,000 coins were used. Mr. Gowland's analysis of the old copper coins of Japan shows their composition to have been, copper, 77.30; tin, 4.32; lead, 15.33; arsenic, 1.14; antimony, 0.31; iron, 1.01; silver, 0.06; sulphur, 0.52, and gold a trace, — a compound very unlike the ideal bell-metal of the European experts. With regard to dimensions, three of the big bells of Japan give the following figures:—

Tōdai-ji bell, — thickness, one-tenth of diameter; height, 15⅓ times the thickness.

Kyōtō Dai-Butsu bell, — thickness, one-tenth of diameter; height, 15½ times the thickness.

Chion-in bell, — thickness, one-eleventh of diameter; height, 13⅔ times the thickness.

The first two of these bells seem to suggest a definite rule of ratios, but the third upsets the idea altogether, and all depart widely from the principles of the Dutch experts. In section Japanese bells show a shape different from that of European bells. The former have the rim thickened internally, so that the mouth is slightly restricted, and to that construction

has been attributed the gentle rising and falling tone of their boom. It would be curious if experiments should prove that this simple device sufficed to secure results which European bell-founders were at such pains to achieve by accurate composition of metal and strict ratios of dimensions. That the Japanese could not only produce a monster bell of magnificent tone, but were also able to manufacture bells having their consonants in musical sequence, is proved by sixteen bells preserved at Nikkō. Rein writes of these bells that, although exactly alike externally in form and size, they yield distinctly and with the finest effect all the notes of two octaves. It is quite conceivable, however, that these bells were cast in accordance with rules obtained from the Dutch traders at Deshima. No similar bells are found elsewhere in Japan.

The form adopted for the hanging bells of Japan has always been, approximately, that known as "mitre-shaped" in mediæval Europe. Elaborate ornamentation of the surface was not resorted to in the case of large bells. They sometimes carry lines of ideographs cast in low relief, — verses from the *sutras*, Chinese apothegms, or more or less detailed lists of the names of the donors of the bell and the date of casting, — and in rare cases they have medallions of dragons or phœnixes. Small bells, however, are often elaborately decorated with *kylin*, *shishi* (dogs of Fo), figures of angels (*ten-jin*), and long inscriptions in prose or poetry.

Those that have any knowledge of the difficulties connected with bell hanging in Europe and America, of the trouble of oscillating towers and defective leverage, will be curious to hear how the Japanese

hang the monster bells spoken of above. It is a very simple process. The bell is suspended from a low framework of powerful timbers, the uprights leaning slightly towards cross-beams connecting their upper ends. Slung by ropes or chains in an independent framework is a massive beam which oscillates horizontally, and is adjusted so as to strike full and square on the boss of the bell. These unpretentious belfries make no claim to architectural beauty or structural grandeur. The bell is everything. It hangs fully *en évidence*, nothing being suffered to dwarf its proportions or interfere with its notes.

The "gong," which alike in name and conception is of purely Chinese origin, was manufactured from a very early date in Japan. Chinese metallurgists understood, and taught the Japanese how to temper and anneal bronze, which, when suddenly cooled from a cherry-red heat, becomes sufficiently soft for easy manipulation, and can afterwards be hardened by reheating and slow cooling. The commonest kind of gong is the well-known discoid, with a rounded central boss; but another form, called the "alligator's mouth" (*wani-guchi*), is familiar to every temple-goer. It consists of two discoids, strung together so that a wide aperture separates them. A third kind of gong is hemispheroidal, — a bowl of beaten metal, which, instead of being suspended like the *wani-guchi* or the ordinary gong (*dora*), is insulated by being placed on a cushion. This variety goes by the name of *kin* or *rin*, the former appellation being given to the larger sizes. There is finally the *kei*, a *V*-shaped plate of bronze, suspended from the apex. All these, with one exception, are beaten with a short stick having a leather-covered pad at one end. The ex-

ception is the "alligator's mouth." It hangs in the vestibule of temples and shrines, and is sounded by means of a thick rope which hangs in contact with its surface, and is swung against it by worshippers to attract the presiding deity's attention. It cannot be said that the Japanese developed any remarkable skill in the manufacture of these objects. The *kin* often emits a prolonged musical note, tender and soft, and Japanese connoisseurs of sound make enthusiastic distinctions between one *kei* and another as to timbre and purity of voice; but it does not appear that the manufacture of these objects ever made any special claim on the attention of experts. In the matter of gongs there can be no doubt that Korea stands far in advance of Japan. Neither country, however, possesses a large supply of fine gongs. Long and patient search for such treasures may often prove fruitless. But if the searcher is so happy as to find a Korean gong of the best type, — and he is just as likely to find it in Japan as in Korea, — he has an instrument of grand sounding capacities, which sends forth wave after wave of complex vibrations, mellow, sonorous, and sweet.

Chapter III

JAPANESE APPLIED ART (Continued)

Second Period — From the Ninth to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century

WITH the transfer of the capital from Nara to Kyōtō, at the close of the eighth century, began the Heian epoch, marked at the outset by the founding of large monasteries, especially those of Hiyei and Koya, and by the spread of esoteric Buddhism. This was the time when the Tang dynasty of China, ruling an empire that touched the boundaries of Persia and included Korea, Mongolia, and Tartary, developed a civilisation such as Asia had never previously witnessed in historical eras, and furnished models of literature, art, and administration which the eclectic genius of Japan was not slow to adopt. Yet the early part of the epoch did not produce any remarkable sculptures. The tendency of the artist was to devote attention solely to the *ensemble* of his statues, and to sacrifice accuracy of form on the altar of idealism. Japanese connoisseurs ascribe this tendency to the influence of esoteric Buddhism. Sculpture, they say, falling entirely into the hands of the priests or passing under their control, aimed uniquely at giving outward expression to the moral attributes associated with each divinity, and paid little attention to anatomical accuracy or technical excellence. Thus the

ninth century and a great part of the tenth are distinguished as a period of amateur work, when religious zealots, insufficiently instructed in the art of sculpture, modelled statues with majestic and beautiful faces, but neglected truth of proportion and decorative accessories. Emergence from that imperfect conception of artistic purpose was due to Kōshō, who worked at the close of the tenth century, and above all to his son Jōchō, whose genius made the beginning of the eleventh century one of the most notable epochs of Japanese sculpture. There is a curious resemblance at this point between the history of pictorial art and that of sculpture in Japan. In the former, Kawanari, the immediate predecessor of Kanaoka, figures as a great painter, the first really great painter of his country, and the originator of an art impulse which culminated, some sixty years later, in the celebrated Kanaoka. But none of Kawanari's typical pictures survive, and Kanaoka's skill also is known by tradition only. So in sculpture the annals speak of Kōshō as the leader of a renaissance carried to a high altitude immediately afterward by Jōchō. But there are no specimens of Kōshō's work, and the greatest of Jōchō's perished almost immediately after their completion. What these men achieved for art was to add virility to the idealism of their immediate predecessors, and to insist upon accuracy of proportion, skill in the use of the chisel and the attainment of decorative effect. Living in a time of excessive refinement and voluptuousness, their style necessarily reflected something of this mood. Thus the bodies of their figures are full, and the contours rounded; the faces are circular rather than oval, the eyebrows are finely pencilled, and the folds of the drapery soft

and flowing. It remained for the sculptors of a later era to rescue the art from these traces of effeminacy and carry it to its point of culmination. To Jōchō and his school, however, belongs the credit of having clearly indicated the route along which their country's artists were to travel to greatness. Of the kind of work that Jōchō was privileged to execute an idea is furnished by annals describing the temple Hōjō-ji, built by the celebrated Fujiwara Regent Michinaga. Upon the statues for that edifice, unfortunately destroyed by fire thirty-seven years after its completion, Jōchō expended the efforts of a lifetime. The principal idol, an effigy of Dainichi Nyorai sitting upon a hundred-petalled lotus, measured thirty-two feet in height; and grouped about it were a Shaka, twenty feet high, and numerous other figures nine feet in height. All these were in wood covered with gilding. In each of the five great halls stood a Fudo, twenty feet high, and four statues of Taison, sixteen feet in height. In the Amida hall were nine gilded statues of Mida, each sixteen feet, and the Shaka hall was peopled by a hundred effigies of the Buddha. There was, indeed, no lack of employment for the religious sculptors of that superstitious era. The four Emperors Shirakawa, Horikawa, Toba, and Shutoku (1071 to 1141) built six great and many small temples, and the sculptors Ensei, Chōen, Inkaku, Kenyen, Kōjō, and Incho filled them with statues. But it will readily be conceived by any student of Japanese history that art could not escape the influences which carried society to the extreme of sensuous luxury in the closing years of the Fujiwara epoch. By degrees the sculptor, abandoning the virile style of the Jōchō school, made delicacy and

refinement his chief aims, and by excessive striving after grace, fell into effeminacy and pettiness. To his demons as well as to his divinities he gave a mien soft as that of an infant, delicate as that of a woman, and even his monsters looked benign and gentle. Following also the example of the Sung artists of China, he sought extreme elaboration of detail and magnificence of decoration, so that some of his effigies became dazzling coruscations of gold and gems. The contrast between Jōchō's style and that of the artists at the close of the Fujiwara (or Heian) epoch is well illustrated by the great sculptor's statues of the Four Deva Kings, preserved in the Hokuyendō at Nara, and the Senju Kwannon (many-handed Kwannon) preserved in the temple Chōmei-ji.

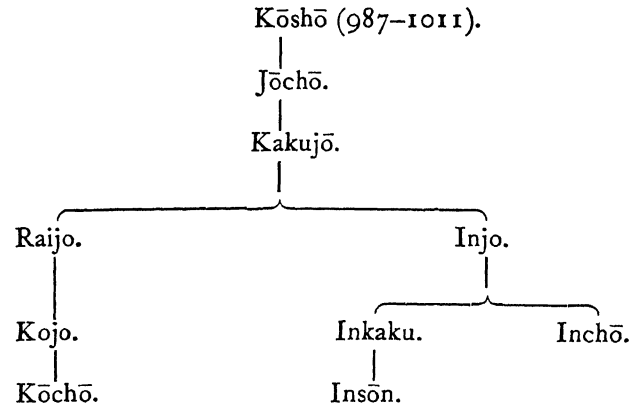
Kōshō, Jōchō, and their descendants and chief pupils are generally known as the "Nara *Busshi*," or "Buddhist sculptors of Nara," though they lived in Kyōtō, and though most of their best work was executed for temples in Kyōtō or in localities remote from Nara. They are also spoken of as "Masamune no *Busshi*," the prefix "Masamune" being intended to indicate that they exhibited as sculptors talent not inferior to that of Masamune as a swordsmith. The names of the best-remembered sculptors of the Heian epoch are: —

780 TO 950

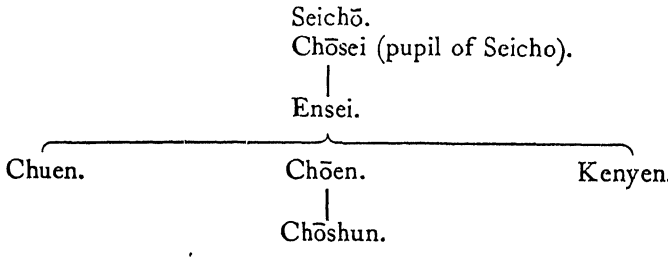
Enso	Kōun priest).
Tari-maro	Kōbō *Daishi* (priest).
Takao-maro	Dengyō *Daishi* (priest).
Ko-maro	Shishō *Daishi* (priest).

960 TO 1185

Eshin (priest)	960
Kansei	970



N. B. — Jōchō received the art title of *Hōkyō* (bridge of the law), being the first sculptor to be so honoured. His most illustrious descendants had the same title. They worked in the Seventh Avenue (Shichijō) of Kyōtō, and were consequently termed the "Seventh Avenue Academy."



N. B. — Chōsei had the art title of Hōin. He and his descendants worked in the Third Avenue (Sanjō) of Kyōto, and were called the "Third Avenue Academy."

Ganku (priest). Myojun (priest).

From the time of the establishment of military feudalism (1192) by Yoritomo at Kamakura until the days (1580) of Hideyoshi, an interval of nearly four centuries, may be regarded as the Kamakura epoch from the point of view of the sculptor's art, and may also be regarded not only as the greatest period of the

art, but also as the final era of vigorous originality in religious sculpture. The greatest masters of the time are generally said to have been Kwaikei and his pupil Unkei, but undoubtedly the finest surviving specimen of sculpture in wood is from the chisel of Jokaku, a pupil of Unkei, and among all Japanese sacred effigies in bronze, the noblest and most majestic is the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura, modelled and cast by Ono Goroyemon in the year 1252. When Kwaikei and Unkei began to work, the *samurai* had become the nation's type of admirable manhood, the *bushido* was regarded as comprising all the canons of chivalrous morality, and the doctrines of the Zen sect of Buddhism had been accepted by the educated classes as the philosophy of irreproachable life. These facts are illustrated by the works of the era. The round, sleek shapes of the Jōchō school are replaced by nervous, energetic forms instinct with strong, martial vitality. The sculptor, knowing nothing more worthy of imitation than a stalwart soldier, goes to human life for inspiration, and models the muscles and contours of his statues with unprecedented anatomical fidelity. Every stroke of the chisel bites deep and direct. The drapery is simple. The attitudes are carefully studied. The faces are profoundly expressive. For the first time strict rules are elaborated, and are so carefully followed in determining proportions that this feature alone suffices to differentiate the school from all its predecessors.

It is only within recent times that exhaustive researches and intelligent criticism have accomplished a clear classification of many great sculptures which for centuries stood comparatively neglected at Nara and elsewhere. As a striking illustration of the confu-

sion previously prevailing, the case may be quoted of two magnificent life-size statues in wood preserved at the temple of Kofuku-ji. The subjects are Brama and Indra, the Deva Kings (*Ni-ō*). These deities are usually placed in niches flanking the outer gate of Buddhist temples which they are supposed to guard. The sculptor's constant aim is to give prominence to the fierce energy, implacable resolve, and superhuman strength which are the chief attributes of the demon-quelling guardians, and the success achieved in the Kofuku-ji figures is unequivocal. Time has almost completely obliterated the pigment[1] that once covered them, and has produced other defacements, so that the images now present a battered and mutilated appearance. But nothing could destroy the grandeur of their proportions or impair the majesty and dignity of their pose. Their anatomy is perfect, and had they emerged from the ruins of some Grecian city, they would be known and admired by every Western student of art. These statues have hitherto been attributed to a nameless Korean immigrant sculptor at the beginning of the seventh century, and they are still so attributed by more than one standard author. If such an identification were admitted, hopeless confusion would be introduced into the whole history of Japanese sculpture. Work which is essentially Japanese and which unmistakably proclaims itself to be of the Unkei school in the thirteenth century, would become that of a Korean artist seven hundred years earlier, and it would be necessary to admit that, by some inexplicable freak of fate, a Korean visiting Japan at a time when sculpture in Korea, Japan, and China was still in its infancy, produced a master-

[1] See Appendix, note 14.

CLAY FIGURES.

(See page 85.)

Eighth century. Preserved in the Temple of Hōrju-ji.


ASAFIA STATE LIBRARY (ND) HYDERABAD

piece unapproached by any Korean or Chinese worker in any era, and presenting all the most obviously characteristic features of the best school of Japanese sculpture in the thirteenth century. There is no occasion to do such violence to reason and history. The figures are from the chisel of Jōkaku, a pupil of Unkei. Two other statues of Deva Kings may be instructively examined side by side with Jokaku's masterpiece. They are colossal images twenty-six and one-half feet high, which stand beside the gate of Tōdai-ji. Awe-inspiring and stupendous, they have been taken by nearly all subsequent sculptors as a classical type of the Two Guardians, and they well deserve that distinction. But the exaggerations which the artists (Unkei and Kwaikei) have resorted to in order to emphasise special attributes reduce the figures to a lower plane of achievement than the supreme eminence on which Jōkaku's Devas stand. The "Watch Dogs" of Tamuke-yama shrine are another example of Tōkei's bold imagination and powerful chisel. His conception of these superhuman animals is at once original and grand. Kōkei, a contemporary of Kwaikei and Unkei, left some works which are particularly interesting as examples of the realistic spirit animating the artists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the great care which they bestowed on all the accessory details of their sculpture. Kōben's "Demon-lantern-bearers" of Kofuku-ji are justly celebrated, and side by side with the savage perplexity of one imp and the vacuous stolidity of the other, may be placed a statue of Monjushiri, dating also from the thirteenth century, which, as a type of serene and contemplative benevolence, ranks not far below the Kamakura Dai-Butsu.

This last magnificent specimen of religious sculpture is among the first objects towards which the traveller turns his feet on arriving in Japan, and perhaps among all the charmed impressions he carries away from that fair country, none survives longer than his memory of the majestic benignity and ineffable repose breathed by the noble statue.

Outside the sphere of purely supernatural motives, the Japanese religious gallery contains some sculptures which may be justly compared with the celebrated busts of Perikles, of Homer, of Sophokles, and other famous men of old. Not that there ever was such a thing as a bust among Japanese sculptures. That curious outcome of Roman practicality would have greatly offended Japanese taste. Yet the sculptures here spoken of may be compared to the bust in one respect, namely, that they derive their characteristics chiefly from the face. Such works are Unkei's statue of Vimala-Kirtsi Japanese Yuima, a contemporary of Gautama; the figures of Muchaku and Seshin in the Kofuku-ji at Nara, the statue of Seitaka-dōji at Hozan-ji, and a few others. These are not likeness effigies, though their remarkable realism suggests that idea. It is possible that the artists were assisted by Chinese pictures, but however that may be, these sculptures compel admiration as great creations of art. The supernatural endowment of the soul within, the almost divine characteristics of these immortal teachers and preachers of Buddhist mysteries, are here eloquently revealed by some subtlety of the sculptor's art which speaks of the men's achievements and not merely of their personality. Unfortunately such works are very rare in Japan. Of likeness effigies there are several, but ideal creations of art outside

the domain of deities and demigods are exceedingly few, and the excellence of those that exist render this paucity the more regrettable.

Portrait statues, in the Roman sense of the term, do not seem to have suggested themselves to the Japanese sculptor. He chiselled a few likeness effigies of celebrated personages — founders of sects or temples, renowned warriors and great administrators — and some of this work shows the suggestiveness that distinguishes refined sculpture from mere accuracy of imitation. But the likeness effigy was not for the purpose of setting up in public. It was hidden away in a mausoleum or a shrine.[1]

From the fourteenth century a strong tendency to substitute elaboration for idealism made itself apparent. The sculptor, while preserving something of the serenity of the Jōchō school, lost the vigour, energy, and austerity of the Unkei ideal, and wasted his strength upon an infinity of ornamentation executed with the utmost delicacy. He reverted also to the graceless dumpiness of the early workers, and sought vainly to compensate this radical fault by such artifices as elongated drapery and innumerable pendants. A fourteenth-century statue of the Eleven-faced Kwannon preserved at a temple in Kyōtō illustrates this depraved style. From the fifteenth century commenced the custom of covering religious statues with lacquer carrying magnificent decoration in gold. Independently of the principal images perpetually exposed to public gaze in temples, there had always been preserved minor statuettes enclosed in shrines called *zushi*, or *butsugan*. These shrines and the images they enclosed now became objects of great

[1] See Appendix, note 15.

splendour and beauty, the exterior of the receptacle richly lacquered, its hinges and metal mountings elaborately chased, its interior refulgent with gold foil and profuse carving, while the statuette itself, mounted on a delicately sculptured pedestal, sometimes offered a contrast of plain white wood or dark bronze, and sometimes outshone the shrine in grandeur.[1]

The names of the most eminent sculptors from the end of the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth are as follows: —

SEVENTH AVENUE, OR WESTERN SCHOOL

From the End of the Twelfth to the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century

Kwaikei, Kōkei (teacher of Unkei), Kaikei, Unkei (son of Kaikei), Tōkei (son of Unkei), Jokaku (pupil of Unkei), Koun (priest), Kanyen (son of Koun), Kōben, Kōshō, Kōyō, Kōson, Kōyu.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

Kōshun (thirteenth in descent from Jōchō), Kōyei (son of Kōshun), Kōtan (son of Kōyei), Kōkitsu (son of Kōtan), Kōyei (son of Kōkitsu), Kōshin (son of Kōyei) Kōrin (son of Kōshin).

THIRD AVENUE, OR EASTERN SCHOOL

From the End of the Twelfth to the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century

Jōyen, Senyen, Inko, Injin, Inbo, Inken, Inku, Inso, Inshu, Injo, Inchu, Inyu, Unga, Unshō.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

Shunkei (priest), Rwaiken, Eiyen, Kōshū (son of Kōrin of the Western School), Kōsei (son of Koshū), Kōsei (son of Kōsei).

[1] See Appendix, note 16.

N.B. Many of the above artists had titles bestowed on them in recognition of their skill. Such titles were *Hōgen* (eye of the law), *Hoin* (sign of the law), and *Hōkyō* (bridge of the law).

The vast majority of the glyptic works executed in early and mediæval times were intended for temples. The same remark applies, as already seen, to pictorial art, but in the case of sculpture it may be illustrated by reference to historical records. Thus, in the reign of the Emperor Shirakawa — eleventh century — three thousand sacred images were ordered by his Majesty for enshrining in temples; in the thirteenth century the Emperor Kameyama placed thirty-three thousand images in the Sanjusangendo in Kyōtō, namely, a thousand figures of the Goddess of Mercy (Kwannon), each five feet high, with thirty-two thousand smaller effigies mounted on the foreheads, hands, and halos of the larger figures; and in the seventeenth century, the *Shōgun* Hidetada issued an edict requiring that every household throughout the land must possess a Buddhist image. Several times, too, in the annals of early eras, references occur as to scarcity of the precious metals — among which copper was included — owing to extravagant piety on the part of sovereigns and nobles, who did not hesitate to throw vast quantities of coin into the melting-pot when the service of heaven called for such sacrifices. From the twelfth century, however, wood became the material commonly used for statues. They were usually covered with gold foil, and it is easy to conceive the magnificently imposing effect produced by such a concourse of gilded images as those of the Sanjusangen-do; a forest of glittering fig-

ures, rising tier upon tier in the solemn obscurity of a vast hall, three hundred and eighty-nine feet long and fifty-seven feet high. Of course this lavish multiplicity of production could not fail to stifle originality of conception. Where the object was to inspire awe by means of a countless concourse of deities, it would have been essentially faulty art that certain figures should detach themselves saliently from the phalanx. Thus, although the names of such celebrated sculptors as Unkei, Kōkei, Shichijō, and Kōyei are associated with the carving of the principal images in the Sanjusangen-do, it cannot be said that any of the effigies stand on a high plane of glyptic art. No two are precisely alike. The sculptors were careful that each should be invested with sufficient individuality to avert the impression of mere iteration. But beyond that feat, which is achieved chiefly by mechanical means, — diverse arrangement of the figures' hands and of the emblems held in them, — there is nothing to relieve the monotony of type and execution.

In Europe and America there is a general tendency to dismiss the ancient sculpture of the East, including that of Japan, as barbaric in character, without any sentiment of idealism and with little or no regard for material beauty. A high place is indeed conceded to Japanese decorative sculpture, but it is held that in the more important branch of the art she never emerged from the barbaric or indigenous stage. That verdict must surely be based on ignorance of the work done by Japan's ancient and mediæval sculptors; ignorance not at all surprising when it is remembered how inaccessible are representative examples of her art and how few have made any serious attempt to study them.

It has been shown above that sculpture owed its origin in Japan to Buddhist influence. Whatever preceded the advent of Buddhism was too crude to deserve consideration. Buddhism came to Japan from India through China. The art of sculpture that it brought to China in its train did not receive any notable development in the latter country. It retained its Indian characteristics. The style was semi-barbaric; symbolism took the place of idealism; the power and attributes of divinity were expressed by distortions of the human figure or by colossal dimensions, and statuary never assumed shapes of beauty. The motives of the art were purely religious. It was an agent for enforcing a supernatural creed, not a medium for producing types of beauty.

In Japan, on the contrary, the art made great advances, but without any material change of direction. The sculptor rose to much higher ideals, but his types remained the same. He continued to be bound by a rule which naturally grew out of such a system, — the rule that all essentially human features should be avoided as far as possible. The influence of that rule was radical. It created at once an essential difference between the object of sculpture as conceived in Greece and endorsed in Europe, and its object as pursued in the East. The Grecian sculptor kept the beautiful always in view. Whatever elements of beauty and symmetry were discernible in the human form, these he sought to combine for the creation of his divine ideal. But the Japanese sculptor had nothing to do with beauty. His aim was to represent certain attributes which are virtually independent of graces of form, being essentially intellectual. What a statue of the Buddha has to suggest is majestic serenity and

eternal, passionless repose. Something of that idea may be contributed by the posture of the limbs, but nothing by a display of nude symmetry. It is not possible to tell how Pheidias would have sculptured a Buddha had the task been assigned to him, but neither his chryselephantine Zeus nor the Jupiter of the Vatican suggests that any Grecian or Roman artist could have produced a figure expressing more perfectly the attributes of Buddha than they are expressed by the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura. If this noble figure be examined closely, a combination of Egyptian and Grecian elements is found. It has the colossal size of Egyptian statues, and it exhibits also plain evidences of attention to the perpendicular and horizontal lines suggestive of eternal stability. On the other hand, the graceful beauty of the contours and the harmonious flow of the drapery belong to the domain of Grecian rather than of Oriental art. Still more characteristic is the Japanese sculptor's manner of representing Kwannon (Kwan-yin), the Deity of Mercy. The traits to be emphasised are limitless benevolence, a spirit elevated beyond the range of any ignoble sentiment, and profound sympathy guaranteed against anxious emotion by assurance of omnipotence to save. That combination of traits is scarcely conceivable in either male or female of the human species. Therefore the Kwannon of the Japanese sculptor does not seem to belong to either sex. It has the gentle graciousness of a woman, the placid resolution of a man, and the ineffable purity of a sexless being.

Human intelligence has never conceived an intelligent, sentient being in any shape other than human. The gods and goddesses of the Greek sculptor were

WOODEN STATUE OF VIMALA-KIRTI.

Attributed to Unkei. End of twelfth and beginning of thirteenth centuries.



merely perfected types of human beauty, and the logic of his canon is easily appreciated. The Japanese sculptor, however, conceived for his deities countenances which, though in no sense repellent or unnatural, do not conform with the ordinary attributes of comeliness. The chief point of divergence is an enforcement of the line of the eyebrow. It is in the countenance that nature shows special beauties of profile, and one of the most graceful is the curve of the eyebrow, which is often so finely treated in Greek statues. This the Japanese sculptor emphasised, so that while its grace of form was much enhanced, the face received an etherealised expression, removing it from the normal human type. His treatment of the ear constituted another distinction. Appreciating the potentialities of its elaborate conjunction of curves, he exaggerated them, as in the case of the eyebrow, and thus produced a feature which helped materially to differentiate the face. In short, his interpretation of the aspect of divinity was to give salience to those elements of the countenance which, in his opinion, distinguished it specially from the animal type. Another point in which his method differed from that of the Greeks was that whereas the latter avoided any expression of emotion, since it interfered with the repose and dignity of their ideal, the Japanese sculptor frankly represented, and even emphasised, the emotions by which his semi-divinities were supposed to be animated. His figures of the Deva Kings are conspicuous examples. Not merely the expression of their faces, but also every limb and every muscle is instinct with fierce energy and implacable purpose. Such works, though splendidly vigorous and imposing, are not "beautiful"

in the Grecian sense of the term, and consequently find no parallels in Grecian sculpture. But it is surely extravagant to allege that they sin against the principles of glyptic art. If Grecian masterpieces suggest that all violent expression should be excluded from the province of sculpture, and that where truth cannot be combined with beauty the former must be subordinated to the latter, does it follow that the canon is final and conclusive? An answer seems to be furnished at once by some of the Japanese sculptor's representations of the Deva Kings, the Four Maharajas, the deities of thunder and storm, and other cognate creations. These statues do not satisfy the standard of classical beauty, but they command profound admiration, and just as perfect Grecian sculpture is an ideal combination of all the highest elements of beauty presented by the human form, so these Japanese sculptures are ideal combinations of all the qualities that typify superhuman strength, resolution, and supremacy. They are great works, not to be excluded from the art gallery because they depart from classic conventionalism, but rather to be admitted as proofs that the convention is not final.

Such works prepare the student to find that the duty of subordinating truth to beauty did not impel the Japanese sculptor to invent graceful or picturesque representatives of human passions and excesses. Instead of devising Satyrs, Nymphs, Fauns, Centaurs, Mænads, and so forth, to typify the lower instincts of humanity, he interpreted the spirit of vice and mischief as an ugly demon, not indeed as hideous as the Satan of Christian art but still a monster. It is scarcely credible that even the Greeks, though shrinking from everything repulsive, would have failed to

sculpture a devil had they believed that the doomed are tortured and that their sufferings are superintended by such a being. But since they entertained no such belief, since their conception of the eternal consequences of sin was very trivial, there is no reason to infer that they excluded the demon from their art gallery merely because his ugliness disqualified him for admission. The truth is that they never conceived him. Buddhism, however, introduced a devil to Japan with appropriate furniture of horns, claws, and fangs. But he did not find a place in the gallery of sacred sculpture, nor did any of the celebrated artists of ancient or mediæval Japan attempt to chisel a demon, if the deities of thunder and tempest, who are certainly demoniacal types, and the impish lantern-bearers of Kasuga, be excepted. On the other hand, if the devil's place in Japanese sacred sculpture was almost as rare as that of the Harpies in Grecian art, it is not to be assumed that he was ostracised because of his ugliness. He figures prominently in Japanese secular carving, which dates from a later epoch, and there can be no question that in the eyes of the Japanese his ugliness had a beauty of its own, as indeed all fully developed types have.

Nevertheless it is necessary to conclude that, on the whole, the range of the art sculptor in Japan was narrow. He was the exponent of a system of religious belief rather than of the heroic and the pathetic in humanity. He had no rich source of motives like that wide domain peopled by Grecian imagination with mythological heroes and heroines, with Dryads and Hamadryads, with Nymphs and Fauns, with Naiads and Nereids, with Satyrs, Centaurs, and Minotaurs, representatives of noble and tender fancies or pictur-

esque vices. In the field of minor sculpture — *netsuke* and sword-furniture — he drew from a large repertoire of motives; from the pages of history, of legend, of folk-lore, and of every-day life. But such work dates from a comparatively late period. In all his early and mediæval sculpture the types were few, and his treatment of them ultimately became conventional and uninteresting. This requires a word of explanation. At first sight it seems as though the large population of the Buddhist and *Shintō* pantheons should have furnished practically unlimited motives. The Indian creed with its broad liberality of eclecticism, and Taoism with its numerous excursions into elf-land and gnome-kingdom, appear to offer a mine sufficiently rich for any artist. But religion made from these a strict selection, and prescribed almost invariable methods of treatment. The Nine Phases of Amitabha, for example, a formula suggesting varied developments, signifies, after all, nothing more than nine images distinguished solely by the positions of their hands and fingers. The legion of genii that exercise supernatural power in mystic regions of space appear to invite an endless play of poetic and artistic fancy. But their orthodox representatives, whether in painting or sculpture, are generally paltry in conception and disappointingly deficient in the dignity of apotheosis. It fared with the sculptors of Japan as it had fared with those of Byzantium. Bound by conventions which religion, not art, dictated, and which superstition enforced, they did not venture to follow ideals of their own, or to introduce strongly subjective elements into their work.

It will further be observed that the cardinal point of difference between Japanese and Grecian methods

was that in Japan the divine nature was never allied with the human form, and thus the attributes of the former found no expression in the beauties of the latter. Japanese deities were always draped wholly or partially. The Deva Kings and demoniacal beings in general had much of the body exposed, because a display of muscular force entered into the artistic conception of such statues. But a nude Buddha or a nude Kwannon would have been an intolerable solecism in Japanese eyes. The peculiar conditions that directed artistic attention in Greece to the graces of the human form did not exist in Japan, where exposure of the person was permitted to the lower orders only, and then for purposes of toilsome labour or ablutions. That the nude should be tabooed in art under such circumstances was inevitable.

Before continuing the story of the development of sculpture, it will be well to speak briefly of the physical character of Japanese bronze, and of the methods adopted in modelling and casting.

"Bronze" is known in Japan as *kara-kane* (Chinese metal), a term clearly indicating the source whence a knowledge of the alloy was derived. It is a copper-tin-lead compound, the proportions of its constituents varying from seventy-two to eighty-eight per cent of copper, from two to eight per cent of tin, and from four to twenty per cent of lead. It also contains small quantities of arsenic and antimony, as well as zinc, varying from a trace to as much as six per cent. There is a tradition that some ancient bronzes had a considerable admixture of gold, but no analysis has showed more than an occasional trace of the precious metal, and not more than two per cent of silver has ever been found. Lead was ex-

cluded from bronze destined for the manufacture of swords and other weapons in which strength and hardness were essential, but it always found a place in bronze intended for artistic castings. An interesting fact is that the ancient bronzes of Egypt, Rome, and Greece were alloys in which the principal constituents varied similarly, though these Occidental bronzes differed from the Japanese in being entirely free from arsenic and antimony. It must not be assumed, however, that the presence of the latter metals in Japanese bronze of later times was due to defective processes, whatever may have been the case formerly. The cause is to be sought in the addition of a pseudo-spiese (called *shirome*); an alloy of copper, arsenic, lead, and antimony, obtained as a by-product in separating silver from copper by liquation with lead, a process introduced into Japan by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, but subsequently altered by the Japanese so that "the results achieved with it far surpassed in economy and in completeness of separation of the respective metals anything that had been accomplished in its original form."[1] Alone *shirome* is worthless, but the Japanese discovered that by employing it as a constituent of bronze, the latter obtained greater hardness without impairment of fusibility, so that it took a sharper impression of the mould. From the early part of the seventeenth century *shirome* was constantly added to bronze destined for ornamental or useful castings, since, in addition to the advantages mentioned above, it facilitated the production of a deep gray patina, which was thought specially suitable for silver inlaying. Competent experts have decided that Japanese bronze is eminently

[1] See Appendix, note 17.

adapted for art castings, not only because of its low melting-point, great fluidity, and capacity for taking sharp impressions, but also because it has a particularly smooth surface and readily acquires a rich patina.

Concerning the quality of Japanese bronze, Mr. W. Gowland, in a paper read before the Applied Art Section of the Society of Arts, makes the following interesting remarks: —

The chief characters on which the value of the Japanese copper-tin-lead alloys, as art bronzes, depend, may be briefly stated as follows: —

1. Low melting-point. This is of especial importance to the Japanese founder, owing to the fusible nature of the clays and sands of which his crucibles and moulds are made.
2. Great fluidity when melted compared with the sluggishness of copper-tin bronzes.
3. Capability of receiving sharp impression of the mould.
4. Their contraction on solidification is not excessive.
5. Their peculiar smooth surface.
6. The readiness with which they acquire rich patinas of many tints when suitably treated.

The advantages resulting from the above properties will be obvious to all artists in bronze. They are chiefly the result of the use of lead as one of the chief constituents of the alloys. The low melting-point of these bronzes, their fluidity when melted, and the facility with which they acquire certain patinas are indeed entirely due to the use of this metal. The fine velvety surface and sharpness of the castings depend in a great measure on the structure of the mould and its comparatively high temperature when the bronze is poured into it, although partly also on the influence of the lead. These alloys are, however, not without some disadvantageous properties, and these are also due to the lead which they contain. They are often low in tenacity, and offer but little resistance to bending and torsion

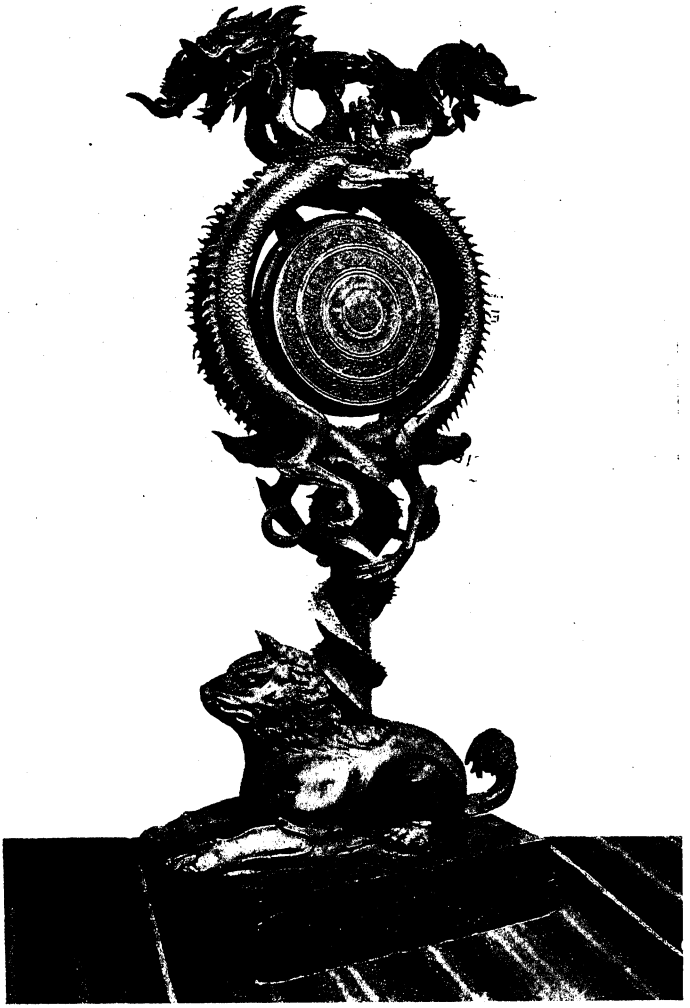
when compared with simple copper-tin bronzes, even when they contain sufficient tin to enable them to hold more lead in solution than they would otherwise do. Their use is hence almost limited to the production of objects of art. And even for those art castings, such as, for example, large equestrian or other statues, where a considerable strain has to be borne by certain parts, their use is unadvisable. But in most art castings of moderate size — and even in many of colossal proportions, where the position of the centre of gravity of the mass does not cause excessive tension in any part — it is not necessary that the metal of which they are cast should possess great tenacity; for all such, these alloys are eminently adapted, and especially so, as by no others can the work of the artist's hand with all its delicate and masterly touches, be so readily and perfectly reproduced.

The above remarks apply to the ordinary bronze of temple images and utensils. There is also a yellow bronze called *sentoku* because the first specimen of it reached Japan in the *Shuntish* (*sentoku*, in Japanese pronunciation) era of the *Ming* dynasty. According to Japanese traditions, this alloy was accidentally obtained when the Chinese melted together the bronze and gold vessels of the conquered Mongols. But gold does not enter into the composition at all; the presence of the precious metal is ignorantly imagined because of the golden colour of the alloy. Copper, tin, lead, and zinc, variously mixed by different experts, are the ingredients. Its beautiful golden colour and glossy texture made it a favourite material in some workshops, and it is largely used in modern times. One very charming variety has a surface like aventurine lacquer (*nashiji*, or "pear ground," as it is called in Japan): that is to say, specks or flecks of gold seem to float up from the depths of the metal. This effect is obtained by heating the alloy many times in

BRONZE GONG.

(See page 89.)

(Height, 3 feet 2½ inches.) Eighth century workmanship. Temple Kofuku-ji.



the furnace, and sprinkling it while hot with sulphate of copper and nitric acid.

With regard to the method of casting, Mr. Gowland's description of a typical operation witnessed by himself is this: —

The bronze was melted in a cupola furnace. Charcoal was used as fuel, and the blast was produced by a "tatara" (kind of bellows) worked by eight persons.

From an early hour in the morning, and whilst the melting was proceeding, the foundry staff was engaged in preparing the moulds for the reception of the metal by heating them to redness. This was effected in the following manner: The mould was placed on five or six bricks, to raise it above the earthen floor of the melting-room. Its ingates were closed with stoppers of clay, and conical tubes were fitted over its air outlets to prevent any fuel from falling into them. A wall of fireclay slabs was now built up around it, the slabs being kept in position by hoops and bands of iron and an external luting of clay, a space about three inches wide at its narrowest part being left between the inside of the wall and the outside of the mould. A charcoal fire was then made on the floor below the mould, and the space between the wall and the mould was completely filled with burning charcoal which was mixed with fragments of bricks and crucibles to prevent the heat from becoming too intense. The interior of the core was also partly filled with the same mixture, and two clay tubes were fitted above it to serve the purpose of chimneys. The temperature of the interior was regulated by partially or entirely closing the upper openings of these tubes with tiles. The mould was kept at a red heat for more than two hours, by which time the metal was nearly ready. The wall of clay slabs and the draught tubes were now rapidly taken down and the fire was raked away. The bricks supporting the mould were carefully removed and the holes through which the wax had run out stopped up with fireclay. During their removal the floor below was sprinkled with water and softened by shovelling, and on this the mould was allowed to rest. Large stones were now piled

around its base to steady it, and the stoppers were removed from the ingates. The ingates, of which there were seven — four about the middle of the mould and three at the top — were fashioned in the form of small cups of fireclay, about two inches in diameter, each having three apertures half-inch in diameter opening into the channel leading into the mould.

The mould was now ready for receiving the metal. On looking into it through one of the ingates it was seen to be at a dull red heat. The bronze was then tapped into four iron ladles, each of which was held by a workman, and a small quantity of wood ashes was thrown upon its surface. The workmen then took up their positions opposite the lower ingates, and on a signal being given poured the contents of their ladles simultaneously into the mould. The quantity of metal had been very accurately estimated as it just reached about half-way up each ingate. These ingates were then closed with clay stoppers luted in with fireclay. Three of the ladles were filled again and poured in the same manner as before, but into the upper ingates, completely filling the mould. During pouring very finely powdered rice bran was thinly sprinkled on the metal as it flowed from the mouths of the ladles. The mould was allowed to stand for six hours before breaking it from off the casting. Several other smaller moulds were then filled in a similar manner, and as one ladleful of metal was sufficient to fill each, they had only one ingate and one air outlet. Whilst the bronze was being poured into them they were rather vigorously tapped with a short stick to dislodge any air bubbles which might have adhered to their sides.

For castings of very large size ladles are not used, but the bronze is run from one or more cupola furnaces, first into a receptacle lined with fireclay, and then from this through an aperture in its bottom into the mould. The outflow is regulated by means of a plug, so that a considerable depth of metal is always retained in the receptacle in order that scoriæ and oxidised scums may be prevented from entering the mould. To prevent oxidation as far as possible, the surface of the metal is kept carefully covered with a layer of charcoal or of partially carbonised straw.

A subsidiary but often necessary part of the founder's work, and one in which the Japanese exhibit very great skill, is the repairing of any defects that the castings may show on their removal from the moulds. Thus, for example, occasionally the rim or other part of a vase may be imperfect, owing to the retention of air in the mould when the metal was poured in. In this case the imperfect part is carefully remodelled in wax on the defective casting, a clay mould is made over it in the usual way, and the wax is melted out. A certain quantity of metal is then poured in and allowed to run out until the edges of the defective part have been partially melted, when the outlet is stopped and the mould allowed to fill. When it has solidified, the clay mould is broken away and the excess of metal filed off.

Handles and ornamental appendages, which have been separately cast, are frequently attached to objects in this manner. Separate parts of complicated groups and often figures are similarly united, and often this is so skilfully done that it is impossible to say whether the whole is a true single casting or is composed of several pieces which have been separately cast.

Rude as the appliances and methods of the Japanese art founder, which I have just described, may seem to us, he has produced with them castings in bronze on all scales, which, with all the modern equipments of our foundries, it would be difficult for us to excel. The simplicity, adaptability, and portable character of his appliances have been of special advantage to him in his remarkable achievements in colossal castings. Thus, when a huge image of a Buddhist divinity or a bell of unusual weight was required for a temple or any locality, the whole of the operations were conducted on the spot. Temporary sheds for the modelling were erected in the temple grounds. The furnace and blowers were transported thither in segments; sometimes the latter were even made by the local carpenters. If the casting had to be made in one piece, the necessary number of cupola furnaces, each with its blower, were erected around the mould. The cost of the blast was *nil*, as the services of any number of eager volunteers, from the crowds which congregated at the temple festival on the day of casting,

were readily obtained for the meritorious work of treading the blowing-machines. In this way the great bells and colossal images were cast.

It may be interesting to note here, that the methods of heating the mould and of repairing defective castings were in use in Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and doubtless at a very much earlier date. They are described by Theophilus in his valuable treatise, "De Diversis Artibus," written in the early half of the eleventh century, and his description is practically identical with that I have just given of them as they are practised in Japan.

What is here stated about the subsidiary processes employed for uniting the parts of colossal figures or complicated groups, has a special bearing on the work of ancient Japanese casters. The great image of Lochana Buddha at Nara is fifty-three feet high. It is in a sitting posture. Were it standing erect, it would measure 138 feet, approximately. Tradition says that the metals used were 500 pounds of gold, 16,827 pounds of tin, 1,954 pounds of mercury, and 986,180 pounds of copper; but the statement is evidently inexact, since it omits lead. The gold and mercury served, of course, for gilding purposes only. This figure was cast not in one piece, but in a number of segments, — plates measuring ten inches by twelve superficially, and six inches in thickness. The same method of construction was adopted in the case of the huge Amida at Kamakura, which has a height only three feet less than that of the Nara *Dai-Butsu*. History tells that the plan pursued by the early Greeks, as illustrated in the Spartan statue of Zeus described by Pausanias, was to hammer bronze plates over a model and subsequently to rivet them together. Not until the sixth century before the Christian era was the art of hollow casting discovered. Now, although

the huge images of Japan, like the very much smaller statues of ancient Greece, were finally built up with plates of bronze, these plates were not originally hammered into shape : they were cast. The building-up process was evidently resorted to because it would have been scarcely possible to cast such gigantic figures *in situ*, neither could the mechanical genius of the age have furnished any means of transporting and elevating upon its pedestal an image weighing five hundred and fifty tons, as the Nara *Dai-Butsu* did. It is thus apparent that the Japanese of the eighth century understood and practised with marked success the process which is regarded as the highest development of the caster's art, namely, the employment of a hollow, removable core round which the metal is run in a skin just thick enough for strength without waste of material. The object was first roughly modelled in clay on a hollow wooden core. Then, over the clay, a skin of wax was applied, and in this the artist worked all the details, whether of form or of decoration. Thereafter a thin layer of clay was applied with a brush, and when it had dried, other layers were similarly superposed, until coats of coarser clay could be added so as to obtain the requisite strength of mould. Then the mould was dried slowly by means of gentle heat, and the wooden core having been removed, the wax was melted out, leaving a hollow space into which the molten bronze could be poured, the outer envelope and the inner skin of clay being ultimately broken up and removed. A bronze casting obtained by this process was evidently a shell without any break of continuity, whereas for great images, like the *Dai-Butsu* of Nara and Kamakura, it was necessary to cast the shell in a number of small

and easily manipulated segments. Records say that the plan pursued by the artists of the Nara *Dai-Butsu* was to gradually build up the walls of the mould as the lower part of the casting cooled, instead of constructing the whole mould first and making the casting in a single piece. On that supposition it appears that the mould was constructed in a series of steps ascending twelve inches at a time, and as the head, which with the neck measures some twelve feet in height, was cast in one shell, it follows that the body must have been made in forty-one independent layers. The labour and risks of such a process are evidently enormous.

Chapter IV

BRONZE-CASTING, ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE AND DECORATION, ETC.

IT is evident from what has been written above that up to the middle of the sixteenth century the resources of applied art were employed almost entirely for religious purposes, — the modelling or casting of sacred images, the lacquering and inlaying of pillars and beams, the pictorial decoration of door panels or ceiling coffers, and the chiselling of ornamental metal mountings and temple accessories. But from the days of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi the services of applied art began to be enlisted for secular purposes even more largely than for sacred. The prime cause of this change was foreign intercourse. Contact with the Dutch and the Portuguese suggested the substitution of large solidly constructed castles for the flimsy wooden edifices that had previously served as military strongholds, and it soon became difficult to reconcile the simplicity of old-time domestic interiors with the lives of the lords of such massive structures. Hideyoshi's tastes greatly promoted this sequence of ideas. Though the scenes and struggles of his career were not at all calculated to develop artistic proclivities, he was found to be an impassioned lover of the beautiful and the refined when he rose to power, and he not only encouraged art effort in every

form, but also converted the once simple tea-ceremony into a vehicle for promoting the collection of costly objects of virtu. It was undoubtedly in this respect that he produced the greatest and most permanent effect on his country; for whereas the unvarying habit of the nation, even in the days of Fujiwara magnificence, had been to cultivate beauty without display, Hideyoshi introduced the custom of associating beauty with display. He may be said to have extended the range of decorative art from accessories to principals, and to have made splendour the perpetual accompaniment of life, not merely a feature of its occasional incidents. It thus becomes necessary to speak henceforth of applied art according to the fields of its employment, not, as hitherto, in connection with religion alone.

Up to the thirteenth century the Japanese did not use iron caldrons for boiling rice. They employed a vessel of baked clay, sinking it in a hole in the ground and applying heat from above. The manufacture of iron vessels for such purposes commenced under circumstances of which no record exists, but it is known to have been inaugurated by Shichirozayemon, a descendant of the second son of the Hōjō Regent Yoshitoki. Had it not been for the skill of this man and his descendants as iron-casters, the tea-clubs established under the auspices of Yoshimasa, at the close of the fifteenth century, might have found difficulty in obtaining urns adapted to their taste. But Nagoshi Yashichiro, great-grandson of Shichirozayemon, was able to meet the novel demand. The term "urn" is somewhat misleading in this context, for the *chagama* of Japan partakes rather of the nature of a caldron. Roughly described, it is a spherical vessel

encircled by a broad flange, so that while the lower hemisphere is sunk into a charcoal furnace, the upper, supported on the flange, remains above the level of the matted floor. But that is indeed a rough description, for the *cha-gama* engrossed the skill of the best artisans, and designs for its shape and ornamentation were furnished by the greatest artists. Yashichiro's models were sketched by the painters that helped Yoshimasa to elaborate the details and utensils of the tea ceremonial, and a metal-caster himself had the honour to be appointed metal-caster and sculptor to the Imperial Household, the Ise Shrine, and the *Shōgun's* family. He received the art name "Miami," and from his time the iron tea-urn occupied a place of great importance. Japanese connoisseurs recognise and appreciate infinitesimally small differences in shape, in quality of metal, and in surface decoration, and though the foreign amateur can scarcely emulate such discrimination, he finds no difficulty in admiring the refined taste, the ingenuity of form and design, and the elaboration of nomenclature that are lavished in Japan on utensils which, in other parts of the world, would be regarded as little better than kitchen furniture. Sesshiu, the celebrated painter, furnished designs for *cha-gama* in the fifteenth century, and when the tea ceremonial, under the patronage of rulers like Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, assumed national dimensions, the manufacture of iron urns became a branch of high art, and continued to have that rank throughout the whole of the Yedo epoch. The *cha-gama*, however, has no honour outside Japan. Being inseparable from the purpose it serves, it has never commended itself to the European or American collector, nor has any writer undertaken to compare

the relative merits of the *amida-do*, the *maru-gama*, the *dai-unryō*, the *sho-unryō*, the *shiri-hari*, and a multitude of other shapes esteemed by the tea-clubs. But there is interest in knowing that the manufacture of the tea-urn gave impetus to metal work in general, and that the *kama-shi* (urn-maker), though proud to be so called, did not by any means confine himself to the production of *kama*. His work extended to all kinds of metal utensils for the use of the tea-clubs or the furniture of temples, and he cast not only bells and pedestal lamps but even cannon. The Nagoshi family attained the highest reputation as *kama-shi*. In the sixteenth century the representatives of the sixth, seventh, and eighth generations, Jōyu, Zenshō, and Sanshō (known also by his art name, Jomi), as well as the latter's brother (Sanehisa or Ittan), were conspicuously famous. Sanshō cast a great bell for the temple of the Kyōtō *Dai-Butsu*, and received the title of *Echizen no Shōjō;* and Sanehisa manufactured a bronze image sixteen feet high for the same temple. These artists, having enjoyed the patronage of the *Taikō* and received from him the honorific appellation of *Tenka Ichi* (first under the sun), refrained from serving the Tokugawa *Shōguns*. But Sanehisa's younger brother, Iyemasa (or Zuiyetsu), was not influenced by such scruples. The Yedo Government conferred on him the title of *Etchu no Shōjō*, and in conjunction with his pupils, Onishi, Jōsei, and Jōhō, he founded a school of artists who executed many beautiful works in bronze and iron during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, were munificently supported by the Tokugawa *Shōguns*, and had titles of rank bestowed on them; a point not unworthy of note, since European writers have denied that Japanese art-

founders ever rose above the grade of common artisans.

The Tokugawa era (1620–1850) is justly regarded as the golden period of the bronze-caster's art in Japan. It was marked, not by any specially conspicuous achievements like the founding of the colossal Buddhas at Nara and Kamakura, but rather by a long series of beautiful works executed for the mausolea of the Tokugawa in Yedo and Nikkō, and for other temples and shrines throughout the Empire. These works consisted of thupas, pedestal and hanging lamps, vases, pricket-candlesticks, censers, pagodas, reliquaries, gates, fonts, figures of mythological animals, images of deities and saints, pillar-caps and other objects of an architectural character. The thupas were never highly ornamented: they depended chiefly on chaste simplicity of outline and graces of form. The same remark applies in part to the vases, censers, and pricket-candlesticks placed before altars and tombs.[1] These showed continual fidelity to traditional models. The vase had the familiar "beaker" shape of China, and its ornamentation consisted only of vertical bands scalloped in high relief and of medallions enclosing Paullownia leaves. The censers, too, had plain surfaces broken by two, or at most three, similar medallions, their lids surmounted by a Dog of Fo and their feet modelled to represent the head of that animal. The pricket-candlestick invariably took the form of a stork standing on a tortoise, or on a lotus calyx, supporting with its beak a leaf of lotus which formed the pricket-receptacle. These objects, though finely modelled and skilfully cast, lose much of their interest owing to their wearisome uniformity. It is

[1] See Appendix, note 18.

in the casting of pedestal lamps (*tōrō*) that greatest progress was made. Here much beauty of form is found with elaborate decoration, both incised and in relief. The pedestal lamp had long been an essential article of temple paraphernalia, and from a celebrated octagonal lantern preserved at the temple *Tōdai-ji* it is learned that, already in the twelfth century, Japanese artists had conceived, or received, the idea of castings *à jour* with high-relief decoration suspended in the network. But the splendid series of *tōrō* (pedestal lamp) cast from the beginning to the end of the Yedo era show a remarkable development of artistic and technical skill, every variety of decoration being used successfully for their ornamentation — decoration in sunken panels, decoration in high, low, and medium relief, and decoration incised. It is commonly asserted that this kind of work was suggested by Korean examples. Certainly there is a broad difference between the methods of the Chinese and the Korean metal-caster: the former confined himself entirely to scrolls and arabesques in low relief; the latter preferred high-relief effects and modelling in accordance with natural forms. But it is impossible to accept the theory that bronzes brought from Korea to Japan by the *Taikō's* forces at the close of the sixteenth century were the first specimens of that nature ever seen by Japanese artists, for in the temple Hokke-ji there are preserved two bronzes of the year 1325, copied accurately from a well-known form of Chinese *céladon* vase having peony scrolls in relief. These make it clear that although the fashion of bronze-casting in Japan may have derived a marked impulse from contact with examples of Korean workmanship in the time of the *Taikō*, an entirely new style was not suggested by that

event. Associated with the fine castings then made is the name of Jiyemon Yasuteru of the Nakaya family, who is commonly but erroneously supposed to have been the first in Japan to decorate bronzes with designs in high relief, taking for motives flowers, birds, figure-subjects, dragons, etc. The *Taikō* bestowed on him the art distinction of *tenka ichi* (first under the sun), exempted him from taxation and gave him the title, *Dewa no Daijō*. It is to the experts of this family that Japan owes the beautiful bronzes of the Tokugawa mortuary shrines in Yedo (Tōkyō) and Nikkō. Jiyemon Yasuteru's great-grandson, Jiyemon Iyetsugu, cast the bronzes for the mausoleum of Iyemitsu, the third Tokugawa *Shōgun* in 1651, as his father, Jiyemon Yasuiye, had cast those for the shrine of Iyeyasu, and every representative of the family down to Kameyama Yasutomo, whose son is now working in Kyōtō, was honoured with an official title, whether *Dewa no Daijō* or *Ise no Daijō* or *Yamato no Daijō*. Some of the choicest work of these experts is seen in reliquaries, and a better idea of their skill may be gathered from the accompanying plates than from any verbal description. Two features may be mentioned, however, since no picture can do more than suggest them; namely, the fine texture of the metal and the beautiful patina it develops in the course of years. This question of patina will be referred to in future pages.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century another new departure was made: bronze-casters turned their attention to objects for use in private houses. Hitherto they have been seen devoting their best efforts to work of a religious character; they now began to cast alcove-ornaments, flower-vases, and

censers for the tea-clubs as well as for the public in general. Such objects were not manufactured for the first time at so late a date as the seventeenth century. Splendid examples in iron, in silver, and in other metals had been chiselled in previous eras by sculptors of sword-furniture. But the works referred to here are bronze. Not until a comparatively recent date did the art of casting that metal become so refined and delicate that its products began to rank with the forged and chiselled works of silversmiths and chisellers of sword-furniture (to be spoken of presently). Some authorities maintain that "parlour bronzes" were first manufactured by Nakayama Shōyeki, popularly called Yōjuro, an armourer of Takata in Echigo, who settled in Kyōtō in 1573, and was equally successful in chiselling iron and in casting bronze. Certainly Shōyeki's descendants were highly skilled bronze-casters. But no authenticated casting of his survives, and it is consequently usual to speak of a female expert, Kame, of Nagasaki (1661 to 1690), as the pioneer of this kind of work. By some authorities, generally well informed, the great error has been committed of attributing to Kame the first use of the *cire-perdue* process, which, as the reader knows, had been commonly employed by Japanese metal-casters for many centuries before her time. The fact is that the excellence of Kame's modelling, — she was especially noted for censers in the form of a quail, — the fine surface of her bronze and the clean sharpness of her casting, attracted so much attention that her methods were regarded as a new departure. Another common error is to say that Kame's era was immediately antecedent to that of Seimin, a bronze-caster whose name is known to all Western collectors.

Seimin's date was fully a century subsequent to that of Kame. He was born in Nagasaki in 1769, and though, before he moved to Yedo in 1805, he doubtless studied the methods which Kame and her father, Tokuye, practised so successfully in Genya-machi in Nagasaki, it does not appear that he gained any distinction until, having undergone a course of training in the workshop of an urn-caster in Yedo, he settled in the Kameido suburb and devoted himself to producing flower-vases, censers, and alcove-ornaments. Seimin had five pupils, Tōun, Masatsune, Teijō, Sōmin, and Keisai, and by this group of artists many brilliant works were turned out, their general features being that the motives were naturalistic, that the quality of the metal was exceptionally fine, that modelling in high relief was most successfully employed, and that, in addition to beautifully clean castings obtained by highly skilled use of the *cera-perduta* process, the chisel was employed to impart delicacy and finish to the design. Seimin preferred the golden coloured bronze, *Sentoku*, to all other alloys, and his specialty was the modelling of tortoises, just as Kame's reputation rests chiefly on her censers in the shape of quails, and Tōun is regarded as one of the greatest casters of dragons that Japan ever possessed. Seimin did not work for the general market: he aimed at producing *chefs-d'œuvres* only, whereas the most renowned of his pupils showed more of the mercantile instinct. Masatsune, a slow and infinitely painstaking artist, shared Seimin's exclusive views, as did also Keisai and Sōmin ; but Teijō, though much of his work is not inferior to that of Masatsune, often aimed at quantity rather than quality. These six men gave exceptional éclat to the first half of the present

century. Not less expert were their contemporaries Suwara Yasugoro (art name Zenriusai Gido), Takusai, and Hotokusai. Gido excelled in casting alcove-ornaments in the form of the Dog of Fo (*shishi*), figures of Hotei, the Genius Gama, and such things. Takusai, who worked in Sado, produced only small objects, chiefly paper-weights, pen-rests and other desk-furniture, imparting to them a beautiful patina; and Hotokusai affected designs in medium relief which he cast and chiselled admirably.

It is often said that after the era of the above ten masters, the last of whom, Somin, ceased to work in 1871, no bronzes comparable with theirs were cast. That is an error. Between 1875 and 1879, some of the finest bronzes — probably the very finest of their kind — ever produced in Japan were turned out by a group of experts working in combination under the firm-name "Sansei-sha." Started by two brothers, Oshima Katsujiro (art name Jōun) and Oshima Yasutaro (art name Shokaku) in 1875, this association secured the services of a number of skilled chisellers of sword-furniture who had lost their *mêtier* owing to the abolition of the sword-wearing custom. Nothing could surpass the delicacy of the works executed in the Sansei-sha's *atelier* at Kobinata in the Ushigome quarter of Tōkyō. Unfortunately such productions were above the standard of the customers for whom they were intended. Foreign buyers, who alone stood in the market at that time, failed to distinguish the fine and costly bronzes of Joun, Shokaku, and their colleagues from cheap imitations that soon began to compete with them, so that ultimately the Sansei-sha had to be closed. This page in the modern history of Japan's bronzes needs little alteration to be-

STATUE.

(See page 112.)

(Wood, height 5 feet 9 inches.) One of the Deva Kings, by Jōkaku, a pupil of Unkei.
Preserved at Kofuku-ji.



come true of her applied art in general. Foreign demand showed so little discrimination that experts, finding it impossible to obtain adequate remuneration for high-class work, were obliged to abandon the field altogether or to lower their standard to the level of common appreciation, or to have recourse to forgeries. Joun has produced, and is thoroughly capable of producing, bronzes at least equal to the best of Seimin's masterpieces, yet he has often been induced to put Seimin's name on objects for the sake of attracting buyers that attach more value to *cachet* than to quality. Even in the manufacture of the beautiful golden-patina bronze (*ki-sentoku*) for which Seimin was famous, Jōun shows no inferiority. His vases are generally of medium size with decoration in high relief, — carp swimming in water, sprays of flowers, mythological beings, and so on. His pupil Nogami Yataro (art name Riuki) is a scarcely less skilled caster, especially clever in modelling insects and tortoises in Seimin's style.

Among modern bronze-casters the names of Suzuki Chōkichi, Okazaki Sessei, Hasegawa Kumazo, Kanaya Gorosaburo, and Tomi Yeisuke, in conjunction with those mentioned above, take rank as masters of their art and perpetuate its best traditions. Suzuki Chokichi has the title of *Gigei-in*, or expert to the Imperial Court. He has emerged from the days of false standards when he manufactured some pieces remembered by him to-day with shame — notably a huge censer now in the possession of the South Kensington Museum, a type of the meretricious confused style often adopted by Japanese artists in obedience to their mistaken conception of Western taste — and he now casts bronzes that comply with the pure canons of

Japanese art, where the naturalistic modelling is always duly subordinated to the decorative design.

In connection with the name of Okazaki Sessei, a special kind of casting should be mentioned. The tomb of Iyeyasu, first Tokugawa *Shōgun*, at the Shiba mausolea is approached by a magnificent bronze gate the doors of which are solid castings with large medallion ornaments moulded in relief in a field of delicately traced diapers. This grand specimen of bronze-casting is known in Japan as *Chōsen Karakanemon* (the Korean bronze gate), in recognition of the fact that the panels were brought from Korea among the spoils taken by the *Taikō's* troops. No panels of comparable magnitude are found in any other mausoleum of the Tokugawa, and the plain inference, supported by traditions and endorsed by modern bronze-workers, is that a casting of the kind was beyond the capacity of Japanese experts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Okazaki Sessei enjoys the distinction of being the first to accomplish such work. In 1890 he cast two magnificent door-panels, their height 7.2 feet, their width 4.5 feet, and their decorative designs ascending and descending dragons (*agari-riu* and *kudari-riu*) modelled in high relief, the former rising from waves, the latter emerging from clouds. The casting of such large panels is regarded as a most difficult *tour-de-force*. Many other beautiful works in bronze have emerged from Sessei's hands, — an eagle in the act of alighting, its outspread wings measuring seven feet across; a figure (8.7 feet high) of one of the Heavenly Kings trampling on a dragon, and other fine conceptions. He is now engaged on a colossal figure, thirty-three feet high, of the great Buddhist teacher, Nichiren, which is to

be set up in a temple at Hakata. Of Hasegawa Kumazo there is not much to be said. He follows the fashions of Seimin and Tōun, and many of his pieces are not at all inferior to the best works of those artists, but he has never been induced to forge the *cachet* of any of the old masters.

Occidental influence has been felt, of course, in the field of modern Japanese bronze-casting. At a School of Art officially established in Tōkyō in 1873 under the direction of Italian teachers, — a school which owed its signal failure partly to the incompetence and intemperate behaviour of some of the foreign professors, partly to a strong renaissance of pure Japanese classicism, — one of the few accomplishments successfully taught was that of modelling in plaster and chiselling in marble after Occidental methods.[1] Marble statues are out of place in the wooden buildings as well as in the parks of Japan, and even plaster busts or groups, though less incongruous, have not yet found favour. Hence the skill undoubtedly possessed by several graduates of the defunct Art School — notably by Mr. Ogura Sōjiro — has to be devoted chiefly to a subordinate purpose, namely, the fashioning of models for metal-casters. To this combination of modellers in European style and metal-workers of such force as Suzuki Chōkichi and Okazaki Sessei, Japan owes various memorial bronzes and likeness effigies which are gradually finding a place in her parks, her museums, her shrines, or her private houses. There is here little departure from the well-trodden paths of Europe. Studies in drapery, prancing steeds, ideal poses, heads with fragments of torsos attached (in extreme violation of

[1] See Appendix, note 19.

true art), crouching beasts of prey, — all the stereotyped styles are reproduced. The imitation is excellent. That is all that can yet be said, though some of these works suggest that Japanese artists will by-and-by attain distinction in the new field.

The reader will not have failed to observe that whereas, in speaking of the early developments of sculpture in Japan, it has not been possible to draw a clear line between the carver of wood and the caster of bronze, the latter has chiefly figured in subsequent pages of the story. It is, in truth, often difficult to distinguish them so far as their place in the records of sculpture is concerned. The bronze-caster sometimes made his own models in wax, sometimes chiselled them in wood, and sometimes had recourse to the aid of the wood-carver. So, too, in modern times, the best wood-sculptors of the era — as Mitsuboshi Riuun and Takamura Kōun — lend their chisels to carve models for metal-casters, just as pictorial artists like Hashimoto Gahō, Kawabata Giyokushō, and Nomura Bunkyo, paint subjects to be copied by goldsmiths and enamellers. These interactions are sometimes recorded, sometimes ignored by the Japanese themselves, who appear to have always attached more importance to the result than to the processes by which it was reached. There is, however, a certain field of work where the wood-carver stands alone, namely, architectural decoration for interiors.

The Buddhist temple buildings of Japan in ancient times, though their architectural outlines were graceful and imposing, had nothing of the elaborate decoration which characterises the sacred edifices of subsequent centuries. Thus the temple Hōriu-ji, reconstructed in the eighth century, while in many

respects a beautiful model, was without sculptured decoration in the interior, the only features that relieved its simplicity being dragons coiled round the four pillars supporting the eaves of the third storey, and mural paintings. This comparatively plain structure offers a marked contrast to the wealth of decorative work which, in such buildings as the mausolea of Nikkō and Shiba, the later temple of Kyōtō and many of the mediæval castles, astonishes and delights foreign visitors, and will always be classed among the most attractive achievements of artistic conception and technical skill that the world possesses. It is with these specimens of wood-carving that Japanese sculpture is chiefly associated in the mind of Occidental students, and there would be much interest in determining the exact date and nature of the impulse that led architects to depart from the comparatively austere precedents of early eras. Buddhism itself does not supply an explanation. It is true that from the first day of its advent in Japan, Buddhism imparted to religious observances many elements of splendour and richness which were entirely absent from the *Shintō* ceremonial. The gorgeous vestments of the priests; the glowing radiance of the altar and its furniture; the elaborate beauty of the temple utensils; the impressive majesty of the monster images and the glory of the multitudinous smaller idols with their mysterious attributes and varied aspect; the mystic incomprehensibleness of the *sutras*, and the sensuous solemnity of the services of chaunted litany and floating incense, — all these things stood in sharp contrast to the ascetic simplicity and unbending severity of the *Shintō* cult. But the Buddhist temple itself, though its architects had free recourse to the artist's brush for

painting door panels, ceiling coffers, and even walls, and to the lacquerer's hand for decorating pillars and beams with golden hues and glowing mother-of-pearl, did not at first excel the *Shintō* shrine in the matter of ornamentation so much as it was itself excelled by the temples and mausolea of the seventeenth century. In these a profuse wealth of architectural decoration gave almost boundless scope to the genius of the painter, the sculptor, the lacquerer, and the worker in metals. The middle of the sixteenth century is generally regarded as the approximate date of this new departure, and undoubtedly the taste for grandeur and magnificence fostered by Hideyoshi, the *Taikō*, was largely responsible. Japanese annalists, indeed, attribute to Nobunaga, Hideyoshi's captain, the first idea of employing sculpture for the architectural decoration of interiors, and are even so precise as to fix the very incident that marked the innovation, namely, Nobunaga's employment of two wood-carvers, Mataemon and Yuzayemon, to chisel dragons upon the pillars of a pagoda erected by him. But when it is considered that within a very few years of Nobunaga's death (1582), the magnificent ornamentation of the temple Nishi-Hongwanji in Kyōtō was completed, and that of the mausoleum of Iyeyasu at Nikkō was commenced, and when it is further considered that nothing in the whole range of Japanese decorative art reaches a higher level of beautiful and skilled elaboration than the pictorial and sculptured work of these buildings, strong doubts are suggested whether an idea which had its birth in the second half of the sixteenth century could have ripened to full maturity by the beginning of the seventeenth. It seems more reasonable to conclude that the great carver Hidari

Jingoro (left-handed Jingoro), who flourished from about 1590 to 1634, and who is counted the prince of Japanese decorative sculptors (*miya-shi* or *miyabori-shi*, as distinguished from *busshi*, the sculptor of images), stood, in the natural order of evolution, at the head of a line of artists whose work, though for lack of opportunity it made no memorable display, helped to educate a taste for architectural decoration and to prepare the way for enterprises which gave full scope to the genius of Jingoro and his successors. There is, however, no certainty about these matters. Broad limits only can be fixed. Thus, while it is known that the celebrated Silver Pavilion (*Ginkaku-ji*), built by Yoshimasa in 1479, and the even more renowned Golden Pavilion (*Kinkaku-ji*) of Yoshimitsu (constructed in 1397) were entirely without sculptured decoration, it is also known that the temple Nishi-Hongwan-ji, erected in 1592, and the mausoleum of Iyeyasu at Nikkō (commenced in 1616) have an unrivalled richness of such ornamentation. It should be explained clearly, again, that reference is not made here to architectural applications of pictorial art. From very early times the services of the painter had been placed at the disposal of the architect. Indeed, the reader will have learned from what has already been written of Japanese pictorial art, that the painter, whether his picture was to hang in an alcove or to find its place on the walls, sliding doors, or screens of an interior, always regarded his work as the decoration of a panel, and was careful to observe the limitations as to chiaroscuro and linear perspective that separate applied art from realistic. The oldest surviving example of pictorial art employed for decorative purposes which dates from the eighth century may

be seen in the ancient temple Horu-ji at Nara, where the walls of the principal hall have distemper paintings, described as follows by the late Dr. Anderson in one of the official catalogues of the British Museum:—

The central figure represents a Buddha seated upon a lotus-throne which is supported by a number of crouching dwarfs. The aspect of the Divinity and the position of the hands (right hand raised, both palms directed forwards) are in accordance with the image of Amitâbha described in a well-known Japanese work, "Nichi-gwatsu Tō-myō-Butsu." On each side of the Buddha stands a Bōdhisattva with hands clasped in prayer. In the foreground are two martial figures of Dêva Kings, and between them two conventional lions. Four other persons appear behind the Trinity, two of them having the aspect of Dêva Kings, and two that of Arharts, but the details have become so indistinct from the effects of time and exposure that identification is very difficult. . . . The half-obliterated remains still manifest the touch of a practised hand, and in colouring and composition bear no small resemblance to the works of the old Italian masters. The painting is probably the oldest specimen of Buddhist or other pictorial art extant in Japan, and has, moreover, a special interest as being one of the very rare examples of the application of a coloured design directly to the surface of the plaster wall (the ordinary mural decoration being usually executed on paper which is afterwards affixed to the wall by paste). It is not, however, a true fresco.

It was through Buddhism, then, that the Japanese learned the use of applied pictorial art for purposes of architectural decoration, and they employed it freely though not in the sense of fresco-painting, for they never understood the art of mural painting upon freshly laid plaster lime with colour capable of resisting the caustic action of the lime. They attained much proficiency in the preparation and application

of wall plaster, colouring it with delicate taste, employing many dexterous devices to vary its surface, and moulding it into diapers, arabesques, and other designs of much beauty. But painting with colour mixed with lime remained unknown to them, and when it is remembered that this method was in use in Egypt from the very remotest era of that country's monumental history, that it passed thence to Italy and Greece, that its extraordinary durability was understood as early as the days of Vitruvius, and that traces of Grecian influence are plainly discernible in Japanese art, the fact that such an aid to architectural decoration did not become familiar to the peoples of the Far East is certainly curious. It would seem, too, that the distemper painting at Horiu-ji was an exotic method which never took root in Japan, for only two other examples of similar work are known to exist.

The Golden and Silver Pavilions alluded to above offer good illustrations of the point to which interior decoration had been carried before the sixteenth century. The former had three storeys. The lowest was quite plain, its milk-white timbers and unadorned walls forming a chaste setting for gilt statuettes of deities and an effigy of Yoshimitsu himself, which formed its only furniture. The ceiling of the second storey was painted with angels (*tennin*) encircled by a border of floral scroll. The third storey was completely gilt, walls, floor, ceiling, and balcony being covered with gold foil.[1] The Silver Pavilion, or, to speak more correctly, one of its associated buildings, showed a partial approach to the decorative style of later eras. The walls had Indian-ink sketches —

[1] See Appendix, note 20.

painted not direct on the plaster but on its paper covering — and the sliding doors were decorated with figure subjects, landscapes, river-scenes, and birds. But there was no sculpture, whereas the State apartments of the great temple Nishi Hongwan-ji in Kyōtō, built at the close of the sixteenth century, show a stage of architectural decoration almost on a level with that reached by the designers of the mausolea at Nikkō and Shiba (Tōkyō), and show also that there devolved on the sculptor of that era duties scarcely less important than those of the painter. Each room is an independent study, all details subordinated to a general design. Thus in one chamber the sliding doors and the lower mural spaces are covered with paintings of peacocks and cherry-trees in bloom, while the upper mural spaces are occupied by massive wooden panels (*ramma*), boldly carved in open-work designs of phœnixes and wild camellia, which stand out with realistic effect against the dimly transmitted light of adjoining chambers or corridors. In another room the pictorial decoration takes the form of Chinese landscapes on a gold ground, and the upper parts of the walls have panels carved in a design of wistaria. The fashion of the decoration may be sufficiently inferred from these descriptions — pictorial below, sculptured above. If to these details a coffered ceiling be added, each coffer enclosing a painted or carved panel, a general idea is obtained of the architectural decoration of the sixteenth century as applied to interiors.

Twenty-five years later, the mausoleum of Iyeyasu, the first Tokugawa *Shōgun*, was erected. There, in memory of this "Orient-illuminating Prince" (*Tōshō-gu*), all the decorative and architectural resources of

the time were employed to construct a mortuary chapel at the dedication of which, in 1617, an Imperial Envoy presided and the Sutra of the Lotus of the Law was recited ten thousand times by a multitude of priests. This mausoleum, together with the chapel in memory of the third Tokugawa *Shōgun*, Iyemitsu, also at Nikkō, and the mausolea of the other potentates of the same line at Shiba and Uyeno in Tokyo, are certainly among the most wonderful efforts of decorative art that the world possesses. Words are quite inadequate to convey a just idea of the combined glory and elegance of the structures, both externally and internally. Innumerable motives are represented, in painting, in sculpture, in lacquer and in metal work, and though the details are so varied and multitudinous that their description would fill a large volume, the arrangements and congruity are so perfect that no sense of confusion or bewilderment is ever suggested. Every available spot or space has some feature of beauty — coffered ceiling, embossed column, sculptured surface, carved bracket and beam, silver-capped pendant, gold-sheathed pillar-neck and beam-crossing, gilded roof-crest and terminal, painted mural space, lacquered door, recesses crowded with elaborate carvings, gates rich with sculptured diapers and arabesques and deeply chiselled panels — the catalogue is endless. Sometimes, as in the *Haiden* of the *Tōshō-gu* mausoleum at Nikkō, the ceiling is divided into innumerable coffers, each filled with the minutest decoration, the whole forming a collection of choice miniatures in rich frames. Sometimes, as at the temple Nanzen-ji in Kyōtō, a ceiling sixteen hundred square feet in area is painted with one huge dragon in black and gold.

The fertility of the minds that designed these decorations, the skill of the hands that executed them, will be as memorable a thousand years hence as they are to-day. It has sometimes been alleged that the designer and the sculptor were generally two, the former being the pictorial artist, the latter a mere artisan, ranking little higher than a common carpenter. There are no means of determining how far that dictum may be trusted. In the Occident the name of every one connected with such works would be handed down for respectful remembrance by succeeding generations; but in Japan the art-artisan has always been self-effacing and the nation has quietly acquiesced in his effacement. His work lives: that is deemed sufficient.

Among the sculptors engaged upon the splendid mausolea of the Tokugawa *Shōguns* and other architectural achievements of the seventeenth century, which was certainly the golden era of decorative carving, not half a dozen names have been preserved. At their head stands Hidari Jingoro (left-handed Jingoro). His very appellation indicates the scanty consideration extended to him. It is as though an artist in America or England should be generally spoken of as "Left-handed Bill" or "Wall-eyed Tom." There is nevertheless an element of justice in the measure of esteem extended to Jingoro and his fellow-sculptors, for although as carvers of flowers, foliage, and birds, they have no superiors in other lands, it is certain that their representations of figure subjects and animals would not have won for them in Western countries greater renown than they received in Japan.

Among the carvings that decorate the mausoleum

of Iyeyasu at Nikkō, for example, a sleeping cat and two elephants are shown as remarkable specimens of Jingoro's skill. He must not be held responsible for the grotesquely false shapes and proportions of the elephants: no Japanese artist has ever drawn an elephant that resembled the real animal, and Jingoro merely followed designs by the celebrated painter Kano Tanyu. But if neither Tanyu nor Jingoro ever saw a live elephant or had any opportunity of studying its true shape, that excuse cannot be pleaded in the case of the cat, and it must be frankly stated that Jingoro's celebrated cat would never attract admiring attention were it removed from the panel where it has slept for nearly three centuries in a bower of buds and leaves.

Another much belauded work from Jingoro's chisel is the *Chokushi-mon* (Gate of the Imperial Envoy) at the Nishi-Hongwan temple in Kyōtō. On the outer panels the sculptor has depicted figures of Taoist Rishi; on the inner, the Chinese sage who washed his ear because it had been polluted by a proposal that he should ascend the throne of his country, and the equally austere cowherd who quarrelled with the sage for thus defiling a river. These figures are not fine sculptures: the most benevolent critic cannot be blind to their defects. Yet on the panels of a gate every part of which has its place in a general scheme of decoration, the carvings are admirable objects. That is the first point to be noted about all the sculptured work in the decoration of Japanese temples and mausolea. Sometimes the realistic illusion is complete. Peonies glow with lusty life in a coffer; chrysanthemums raise slender tendrils from a cornice; cranes, wild fowl, or phœnixes actually fly

from their wooden niches, and plum-trees seem to grow on a panel. But the general rule is that the sculptures do not gain by independent scrutiny. It is in their subordinate rôle that they command charmed enthusiasm. The statement is in itself a high tribute to the decorative genius of the Japanese, but it involves also the conclusion that the subjective element had to be almost entirely abolished from the work of the sculptor, and that his highest success was achieved when his efforts showed least individuality.

As to the general character of the designs chosen by painters and sculptors for the adornment of these temples and mausolea, an excellent criticism is contained in the introduction to Mr. J. Conder's unpublished work on Japanese architecture: —

Behind the general impression of harmony produced by the decorated architecture as it existed and still exists in the best examples of the Buddhist style, there is revealed, upon careful analysis, a combination of curiously incongruous elements. The weird and the grotesque are blended with the severe and the natural. Archaic forms, which one must follow back to Indian creeds for their original meaning, are quaintly combined with free and flowing natural forms. Demons, monsters, and crude conventional representations of foreign or imaginary animals are painted side by side with the birds, flowers, and landscapes of the changing seasons. The subtle elements of wind, cloud, water, and spray are in one place represented in definite conventional lines which convey but a vague idea of their respective force and motive, and in another place by soft dreamy touches and blurred effects. There is everywhere to be traced the influence upon an artistic Oriental mind of the beautiful forms and colours of the mundane universe, combined with the external influence upon his imagination of the Buddhist religion, dictating awe-inspiring shapes and mysterious symbols which he accepted and depicted as a portion of his superstitious belief and

homage. Decoration was developed in buildings of different type in accordance with a system by which it was divided into three or four degrees of elaboration, the highest degree of richness being reserved for the temples and mausolea. The painter's art appears in the delicate forms and soft tints of birds and blossoms cushioned in the white wood-work of princes' chambers, and it may be seen also in deeper bolder tones, amid a pandemonium of saints and demons, sacred monsters, celestial flowers and symbols, set in gilded and lacquered framing, adorning the gloomy interior of religious shrines.

Colours were freely used in these decorative schemes. Thus, in the sanctuary of the Tōshō-gu mausoleum at Nikkō, wide fields of silver and gold, occupying the lower parts of the walls, underlie beams diapered in vermilion, leaf-back green, cerulean blue, and dead white. Broad frieze spaces in deep rich red are interrupted by oval medallions enclosing delicately chiselled designs of birds and flowers picked out with red, gold, green, blue, and touches of white. Above these and stretching from capital to capital of the pillars, are formal diapers in green, red, and gold, with intervening floral scrolls in gold and green on a chocolate-brown ground; the pillars, whose capitals have belts of fern-fronds in red, green, blue, and white, and fillets of blue and gold, support golden beams, and above the latter rises an arched entablature profusely carved and decorated, and brilliantly coloured in all the hues mentioned above. Finally, this wealth of soft tints and elaborate fancies is separated from the ceiling by a concave cornice uniformly gilt, through which runs horizontally a solid ribbed beam of *noir-mat* lacquer. The ceiling is coffered with a framework in gold and black. The coffers, of which the ground colour is gold, have a border of

cloud scroll in green, white, and red, and the centre of each is occupied by an elliptic medallion in purest cerulean blue, enclosing a golden dragon and having for border two narrow rings of white and chocolate-brown. This is little more than a mere catalogue of colours. It conveys not even a shadowy idea of the beauty and brilliancy of such a decorative masterpiece, glowing and palpitating with luxury of tint and profusion of detail from floor to architrave, until in the ceiling medallions the spectator seems to be gazing into the blue profundity of a sky where glittering monsters sweep through space. But the reader will gather even from such an imperfect description some notion of the profusion with which colours and sculpture were employed in the architectural decoration of interiors. It does not appear that the Japanese artist had any definitely formulated theories about the use of colours. He does not even seem to have explicitly recognised the differences of primary, secondary, or tertiary, or to have possessed any clear rules about chromatic equivalents. Yet it would be possible to deduce from his practice many of the principles that are now regarded as fundamental in the science of Occidental decorative art. Thus his idea of distribution was so just that, in using the primary colours, he limited the areas and quantities of their application by careful consideration of the total space to be decorated, in order that the requisite balance and support might be obtained by proportionately larger masses of secondary and tertiary tints. It may be objected that he neglected this principle in the exterior decoration of some of his sacred edifices, as the pagodas at Nikkō, for example, where a massive, towering structure is robed from base to summit in

IMAGE.

(See page 113.)

(Wood) of one of the twelve devas. Sculptured by Kōkei, 1190. Preserved at Kofuku-ji.



vermilion red. But any criticism of that nature is silenced at once when these edifices are considered with reference to their environment, — a profusion of green foliage, which effectually balances the primary colour of the pagoda. It is found, also, on careful examination of the mausolea at Shiba, Uyeno, and Nikkō, that the primary colours appear on the upper parts of objects, the secondary and tertiary on the lower; that proportion is successfully preserved between the volumes of full and low tones; that the art of separating coloured ornaments from fields of contrasting colour is thoroughly understood; that the solecism of mutually impinging colours is strictly avoided; that the tone of ground colours is in excellent harmony with the quantity of ornament, and that the *ensemble* presents that neutralised bloom which indicates perfect blending of tones and tints.

As already stated, there are few records of great sculptors connected with architectural or religious carvings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although such remarkable work was accomplished. Hidari Jingoro died in 1635. Among his successors the best remembered are Hidari Eishin (1632–1700), Shōun (1660–1705), Tancho (1630–1695), and Hidari Katsumasa (1670–1727). Other names are included in an appended list, but the recorded number of artists is quite insignificant when compared with the quantity of fine work executed from the beginning of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. The subordination of the individual to achievement is specially marked in the field of decorative carvings for temples and mausolea.

Chapter V

VARIOUS APPLICATIONS OF ART

IN a previous chapter some account has been given of the origin and development of the sacred mime, of its connection with the bucolic dance, and of the gradual rise of the *den-gaku* and the *saru-gaku*. From the second half of the fourteenth century, when the Ashikaga *Shōgun* Yoshimitsu ruled in Kyōtō, the *saru-gaku* became an almost necessary feature of all social entertainments among the upper classes; and in the time of Yoshimasa (1449–1472) four families, Kwanze, Kamparu, Hōshō, and Kōngō, were publicly recognised as the possessors of all the best traditions and methods of the mimetic art. The great captain, Oda Nobunaga, and his still greater contemporary, Hideyoshi, the *Taikō*, were ardent patrons of the *saru-gaku*, dancing it themselves with the utmost earnestness. The *Taikō*, studied under Gōshō, the master expert of his era, and danced to the accompaniment of a song specially composed (the *Akechi-uchi koya-mode*) in commemoration of his victory over the traitorous slayer of Nobunaga. Thenceforth to be able to take a part in the *saru-gaku* — or the *No*, as these dances were usually called in later times — became an absolutely essential accomplishment of every feudal chief, court noble, or *samurai* of rank. It has to be remembered that although the Japanese are intensely fond of spectacular displays,

the public theatre did not come into existence until the seventeenth century, and never, until quite recent times, was regarded as a proper resort for the upper classes. By way of compensation private theatricals had extensive vogue, not private theatricals in the Occidental sense of the term, but mimetic dances representing historical, mythological, poetical, and legendary scenes, or ideal renderings of natural phenomena. Such were the stately and picturesque *no-gaku*, supplemented by farcical interludes called *no-kyōgen*. From the sixteenth century the canons of refined hospitality prescribed that every one with aristocratic pretensions should be able to offer to his guests an entertainment of that nature, or to take part in it himself when bidden elsewhere. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the costumes worn by the performers or the richness of all the accessories; and since complete disguise was absolutely essential to the realistic effect of such mimes, the mask possessed paramount importance. Reference may be made *en passant* to a misconception endorsed by more than one student of Japanese customs, namely, that the use of the mask in the theatre was a habit in Japan as it had been in Greece. The mask in Japan is not a theatrical adjunct, its employment is limited to the sphere of mimetic dances. The professional actor never wears a mask except for the purpose of figuring in the dances that often occupy the intervals of the drama. It is commonly believed in Japan that wooden masks were used at times as remote as the seventh century, and that the earliest of them represented the features of Uzume, the divine *danseuse* whose spirited performance drew the Sun Goddess from her cave. But the oldest surviving specimens date

from the ninth, tenth, and twelfth centuries. They are preserved in a temple on the sacred island of Miyajima (now called Itsukushima), and they show that even in such remote eras the sculptor possessed great skill in delineating the human countenance under the influence of emotion. To later eras, however — the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries — belong a wonderful series of masks which constitute a special outcome of Japanese sculpture. Every aristocratic household and every Buddhist or *Shintō* parish possessed a store of these masks. It is difficult to conceive any type of face, any display of passion, any exhibition of affection, of fury, of cruelty, of benevolence, of voluptuousness, of imbecility, that these masks do not reproduce with remarkable realism. Japanese catalogues set forth two hundred and sixty masks, each of which has a distinguishing appellation and is recognised as the work of an expert. The art of the sculptor was not exercised merely in modelling the features. His work was counted imperfect unless he fashioned the mask so that it could be worn by any one for a lengthy period without discomfort. There can be no doubt that the great success achieved in carving masks and the moving effect of their skilled use in association with the highly trained gesticulation and posturing, the splendid costumes and the weird music of the *saru-gaku* and the *no-gaku*, exercised a potent influence on the methods of the professional actor of the theatre proper. He did not wear an artificial mask, but he sought to mould his features into a mask-like picture of concentrated emotion, thus establishing a vivid link between his performance and the classic mime of aristocracy.

Masks carved by celebrated experts are among the most valued treasures of æsthetic Japan. They are wrapped in silk and preserved in lacquered boxes with all the care appropriate to fine works of art; and they deserve such attention, for in this class of sculpture Japan stands unequalled and unapproached by any other country. Miniature reproductions of classic types, carved in ivory, wood, or metal, sometimes merely as examples of skilled sculpture, sometimes in groups of two or more to form *netsuke*, — presently to be spoken of, — and sometimes as ornaments for sword-furniture, are included in many foreign assemblages of Japanese art-objects, but the finest masks of the mimetic dance have seldom come within reach of Western collectors.

The names and dates of celebrated mask-carvers are these: —

Nikkō, Mirokū, Yasha } tenth century. Only a few masks by these experts are extant.

Bunzo — thirteenth century. A Buddhist priest.

Hibi Munetada (called Hibi because he worked at Hibi in Etchiu) — fourteenth century. Carved meagre faces skilfully.

Echi Yoshifune — fourteenth century.

Koushi, or Kiyomitsu — fifteenth century.

Shakuzuru (called also Yoshinari and Ittosai, art name) — fourteenth century. Celebrated for faces of warriors.

Ishikawa Riuyemon Shigemasa — fourteenth century. Celebrated for masks of women and children.

Tokuwaka Tadamasa — fifteenth century. Specially skilled in planting hair.

Sanko — fifteenth century. A Buddhist priest.

N. B. The above are distinguished as *Jissaku*, or "true sculptors."

Soami Hisatsugu — fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (said to have lived in the time of Yoshimasa).
Chigusa — sixteenth century. Celebrated for masks of deities.
Fukurai Masatomo — fifteenth century. Masks of old men.
Horai Ujitoki — fifteenth century. Masks of female faces.
Haruwaka Tadatsugu — sixteenth century. Masks of young faces.
Uwo Hyoye — sixteenth century. Masks of old men and demons.

N. B. The above, from Soami to Uwo, are called the "Six Sculptors" (*Roku-saku*).

INTERMEDIATE SCULPTORS ("CHIU-SAKU")

Jiunin — sixteenth century.
Miyano — sixteenth century.
Sairen (a priest) — sixteenth century.
Kichijo-in (a priest) — sixteenth century.
Kaku-no-bo — sixteenth century. Had the art title of *Tenka-ichi*, and is counted an eminent sculptor.
Boya Magojiuro, Dansho } date uncertain.
Gunkei — twelfth century.
Kasuga Tori — eighth century. A celebrated sculptor of Buddhist images who is supposed to have carved masks of *Okina*.
Tankai Rishi (or Hōzan) — seventeenth century.
Shimizu Rinkei — a pupil of Tankai.
Shōun — (1647–1700).

THE DEME FAMILY

Deme Jikan Yoshimitsu. Called also Ono, or Kizan or Sukezaemon — sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Originally an armourer of Echizen, he became a sculptor of masks after moving to Yamashiro. In 1595 received the art title of *Tenka-ichi* from the *Taikō*. Entered the Takugawa service and died in 1616.

Deme Yukan Mitsuyasu — seventeenth century (d. 1652). Son of Jikan. Called also Sukezaemon.
Deme Tohaku Mitsutaka — seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (d. 1715).
Deme Tosui Mitsunori — seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (d. 1729). Called also Mokunosuke, Manku, and Mambi.
Deme Hokan Mitsunao — eighteenth century (d. 1743). Called Hanzo.
Deme Yusai Yasuhisa — eighteenth century (d. 1766).
Deme Choun Yasuyoshi — eighteenth century (d. 1774). Called also Makunosuke.
Deme Toun Yasutaka — nineteenth century. Called also Untaro.
Deme Hanzo Yasukore — nineteenth century.

THE THREE "ECHIZEN DEME"

Deme Jirozaemon Mitsuteru — sixteenth century.
Deme Jirozaemon Norimitsu — seventeenth century.
Deme Jirozaemon Yoshimitsu — seventeenth century. Called also Genjiro.
Deme Gensuke Hidemitsu — seventeenth century. Called also Joshin, or Jokei.
Deme Genkiu Mitsunaga — seventeenth century (d. 1672). Son of Jokei. Called also *Ko-Genkiu* (the old Genkiu) and Manyei.
Deme Genkiu Mitsushige — seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (d. 1719).
Deme Genkiu Mitsufusa — eighteenth century (d. 1758).
Deme Genkiu Mitsuzane — eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (d. in 1812).
Deme Naka Mitsuyuki — nineteenth century. Called also Taroyemon.
Deme Gensuke Mitsuakira — nineteenth century.
Deme Genri Yoshimitsu — seventeenth century (d. 1625).
Deme Genri Toshimitsu — seventeenth century.

OTHER CELEBRATED MASK-CARVERS

Izeki Kawachi Iyeshige — seventeenth century (d. 1646).
Yamato Mamori (a pupil of Kawachi).
Izeki Jirozaemon — eighteenth century. Had the rank of *Kazusa-no-suke* and was also called Chikanobu and Kiushiu. He was accorded the honorary title of *Tenka-ichi.*
Omiva Yamato Bokunyu — seventeenth century (d. 1672). Had the honorary title of *Tenka-ichi.*
Kodama Omi Mitsumasa — seventeenth century (d. 1624). Had the title of *Tenka-ichi* and was called also Manshō.
Miyata Chikugo (a pupil of Manshō).
Kodama Choyemon Tomomitsu — seventeenth century (son of Omi).
Kodama Choyemon Yoshimitsu — eighteenth century.
Senshu Yashamaru — fifteenth century. Had the rank of *Tama-no-Kami* and the additional name of Yorisada.
Senshiu Yoriyoshi — fifteenth century. Had the rank of *Iyo-no-Kami.* This artist was the younger brother of the priest Sanko, mentioned above. The two Senshiu were the ancestors of the Deme family of Echizen.
Ariyoshi *Nagato nō Sho* — nineteenth century. A *samurai* of the Miyatsu fief, who attained distinction as a chiseller of masks.

Several amateurs gained distinction as carvers of masks, but no accurate list of their names has been preserved.

Belonging strictly to the category of costume, but elevated to the rank of art-products by the beauty of their workmanship and the wealth of fancy lavished on their modelling and ornamentation, the *netsuke*, *ōjime*, *kagami-buta*, *kana-mono*, and *kuda-kusari* must be accorded a high place in any account of Japanese sculpture. The dress of the Japanese having no pockets, except the recesses of the sleeves, which could not be used for anything heavy, it has been the

custom, from a remote era, to attach to the girdle various objects of every-day service. The most ancient of these is the *kinchaku*, or money-pouch. Of course in the days when media of exchange were practically limited to strings of copper cash much too bulky and cumbrous to be carried on the person, a money-pouch was a useless article to the middle and lower classes. But to aristocratic and wealthy folks, who made their payments with gold dust or coins of the precious metals, the *kinchaku* was more or less necessary. After a time, however, it ceased to be much employed as a monetary receptacle, its place being taken by a kind of pocket-book carried in the bosom. The *kinchaku* did not go out of vogue, however. It now became a part of a child's costume, and served to contain an amulet and a wooden ticket on which were inscribed the name and address of the child's parents, the little one being thus placed under the protection of heaven, on the one hand, and of kindly folks who might find it straying or in trouble, on the other. That is now the chief function performed by the *kinchaku*, though its original use as a money-bag is still perpetuated by old ladies. As part of a child's toilet it is often a very beautiful affair, made of richly embroidered silk or costly brocade, and the method of attachment to the girdle is simply by tying. But tradition says that when men used the *kinchaku*, they preferred to keep it in its place by the aid of a kind of button. The strings of the pouch being fastened to this button, the latter was passed under the girdle and brought out above it so as to offer an effective obstacle to the withdrawal of the pouch without the owner's cognisance. The pouch itself may have been a simple affair in ancient times.

There is no information on that subject; but when the elaborate and beautiful character of Japanese costume at so remote a date as the eighth century is remembered, there seems reason to suppose that the quality and ornamentation of the *kinchaku* were not incongruous with the garments it accompanied. At all events it is known that by the middle of the seventeenth century the choice of material for the manufacture of the *kinchaku* and of the other objects suspended from a gentleman's girdle — objects known generically as *sage-mono*, or suspended things — had become a business demanding as much delicacy of judgment and causing as great a mental strain as a Western belle's selection of her first ball-dress. It is mentioned, in a Chinese record of old-time officialdom and its functions, that the duty of collecting various kinds of furs and skins in the autumn, and presenting them to the Imperial Court in the spring, occupied the constant attention of an important bureau. The Japanese Imperial Court was never sufficiently wealthy or sufficiently luxurious to follow that example; but the extraordinary development of refined taste among aristocratic classes under the feudal system is aptly illustrated by the fact that in records dating from the seventeenth century, no less than ninety-three different kinds of leathers and furs are enumerated and carefully described as orthodox materials for *sage-mono*. Of these, ten were of Japanese manufacture, the others being imported from China, India, Persia, Ceylon, Luson, Russia, Holland, and elsewhere. No attempt has ever been made to identify these leathers, and even if sufficient inducements offered, the task would scarcely be possible, seeing that many of the skins, after reaching Japan, were

subjected to processes which must have effectually obscured their *provenance*. For example, one kind, having been macerated some ten times with juice extracted from the bark of the peach-tree, was then dyed with a solution of gall-nut and sulphate of iron, after which it was polished with a pumice-stone, treated with plum-juice, and finally softened by hand-rubbing. Reference to these materials is made here, not for the purpose of discussing their origin or characteristics, but solely because they illustrate the care and taste bestowed on the *sage-mono*. It must not be supposed, however, that all these curious and pretty materials were imported or manufactured for the sake of the *kinchaku* alone. The *kinchaku* is given a prominent place among the *sage-mono* because it seems to have been the oldest of such objects. In importance it was quite secondary to the tobacco-pouch and pipe-case. Tobacco-pouches and pipe-cases, however, are comparatively modern affairs. Whether the Japanese learned to smoke tobacco when Hideyoshi's troops invaded Korea, or whether they received it from their first Occidental visitors, the Portuguese, they certainly knew nothing of the virtues and vices of the leaf until the closing years of the sixteenth century, nor was it till the middle of the seventeenth that the pouch and the pipe began to assume the dainty and highly ornate forms now so familiar. Tobacco did not originally commend itself to polite society in Japan. Sir Ernest Satow, quoting from the family records of a certain Dr. Saka, describes that, in the year 1609, the dissipation of tobacco-smoking led to the formation of two associations in Edo (Tōkyō), the Bramble Club and the Leather-breeches Club. Their members were roistering blades

who loved to indulge in the pastime known as "painting the town red," or, still better, to fight with each other, when the toughness of the leather-breeches" was supposed to be more than a match for the tenacity of "brambles." The pipes used by these swashbucklers were from four to five feet long. They thrust them into their girdles after the manner of swords, and employed them as cudgels when occasion offered. No transition could have been more signal than the passage from these monster pipes to the tiny little *kiseru* of later eras, which held about as much tobaceo as could be piled on the nail of a young lady's little finger, and were perfect *bijoux* in the matter of shapeliness and decoration. Even after several vain official attempts to check the spread of the tobacco habit had been abandoned as abortive and unnecessary, some time elapsed before polite folk began to carry pouches and pipes at their girdles, for smoking in the open air was not practised, and on entering a friend's home the visitor expected to have a tobacco-tray set before him, and would as soon have thought of smoking a pipe of his own tobacco as of taking from his sleeve a packet of tea and a teapot to brew his own beverage. Were it known exactly when the habit of attaching pipes and pouches to the girdle became fashionable, the origin of the beautiful ornaments connected with this class of *sage-mono* might be discussed with some confidence. But there are pictures extant which show that, as late as the middle of the seventeenth century, a lady's pipe — for by that time ladies had fallen victims to the seductive habit — was so long that it had to be carried by an attendant, and the inevitable conclusion is that the miniature pipe and its charming concomitants —

case, pouch, toggle (*netsuke*), cord-clutch (*ōjime*), and so forth — did not come into existence till the close of that century.

There is another girdle-pendant (*sage-mono*) long antecedent to the pipe and pipe-pouch, — a pendant to which some authorities assign a greater age than even that of the *kinchaku*, — namely, the *inro*. Originally, as its name implies, a little bag or wicker-work receptacle for holding the seal (*in* signifies seal, and *ro*, a bamboo basket) which in Japan took the place of a written signature, the *inro* was subsequently made of wood, lacquered black; and thereafter being converted into a tiny medicine chest, took the form of a tier of segments, each fitting into the other vertically, so that the whole, when put together, became a many-receptacled little box, from three to four inches long and two or two and a half inches wide, its corners rounded and its thickness reduced so that it was always handy and never obtrusive. There have been enthusiastic collectors of *inro*, both foreign and Japanese. It is a taste with which every virtuoso must sympathise, for as specimens of exquisitely artistic and infinitely painstaking decoration in lacquer, inlaying, and sculpture, these tiny medicine-boxes deserve unstinted praise. For the moment, however, attention may be directed to the appendages of the *inro* rather than to the *inro* itself. The edges of the two long faces carried a little cylinder, just large enough to admit a silken cord, the ends of which were passed, immediately above the *inro*, through an *ōjime*, or cord-clutch. There is reason to think that the *ōjime* was the first highly ornate appendage of both the *inro* and the *kinchaku*, for it occupies in the latter also the same place as in the *inro* and serves the

same purpose. As a general rule it was simply a bead of some substance regarded as precious by the Japanese, though occasionally it was made of *cloisonné* enamel, porcelain (Chinese), gold, silver, *shakudo*, *shibuichi*, ivory, wood, or the kernel of a peach, microscopic sculpture being added in the case of the last seven substances. No less than sixty-four different kinds of minerals and other matters were used to form these beads when the beauty of the substance alone was relied on. Among them were coral (pink, white, and black), amber, lapis lazuli, pearl, rock-crystal, aventurine, agate, marble, garnet, malachite, the skull of the crane, and prehnite. These details are mentioned for the purpose of showing how large a measure of care was bestowed on the appurtenances of the *inro*, and how unlikely it was that the button in which the ends of the silken cord were united for passage through the girdle would have been less ornate than the bead just spoken of. In point of fact the button of the *inro* did assume the form of the beautiful object called *netsuke* (*ne* means "root" or "end," and *tsuke*, to fasten) as early as the end of the fifteenth century, when the dilettante *Shōgun* Yoshimasa set to the nation an example of luxury and elegance in almost every department of daily life. There has been circulated in Europe a theory that the introduction of tobacco in the sixteenth century called the *netsuke* into existence, its original use being to serve as a button for the tobacco-pouch; and it has further been suggested that the chiselling of the *netsuke* would never have been carried to such a degree of elaboration had not a great number of idol-carvers found themselves without occupation during the second half of the seventeenth century. The

latter idea is based on the fact that the second Tokugawa *Shōgun*, Hidetada (1605–1623), in connection with his crusade against Christianity, ordered every household throughout the realm to furnish itself with a Buddhist idol, and that when the extraordinary demand thus created had been satisfied, the *busshi*, being without employment, turned their attention to chiselling tobacco-pouch buttons. But Japanese authorities are agreed that the *netsuke* became fashionable as an appendage of the *inro* long before the tobacco-pouch began to be suspended from the girdle. Another error which has found currency in the same context, and which has helped to build up the theory connecting the *netsuke* with the sculptor of Buddhist idols is that many *netsuke-shi* (makers of *netsuke*) lived and worked at Nara, the chief home of idol-makers. It is certainly true that Nara may be called the birthplace of Japanese sculpture, and that, from the twelfth century onwards, the name "Nara" came to be associated with religious sculpture, just as in later times pottery was called *seto-mono* after the place (Seto) of its chief production. It is also true that among the celebrated productions of Nara — the *Nara meibutsu*, as they are called — there have long been included miniature images known as *Nara ningyo* (Nara puppets) which might easily be supposed to have suggested the earliest form of the *netsuke*. But the *Nara ningyo* were not connected with the *netsuke*, and as for the assertion that many *netsuke-shi* lived at Nara and that the carver of Buddhist images turned his chisel to the *netsuke* in default of other work, it is enough to say that the records, down to the end of the eighteenth century, do not contain the name of more than two *netsuke*-carvers who resided at

Nara, and that they include only one sculptor of the *busshi* class. With exceptions so rare as to prove the rule, the *netsuke-shi* had their workshops in one of "the three cities" — Yedo, Kyōtō, and Ōsaka — and confined themselves mainly to ornamenting the appendages of *sage-mono*. Reference may be made here to another strange theory which has been advanced by more than one European writer, that many *netsuke*-makers were dentists whose skill in the use of the chisel was acquired by carving false teeth. In the long list of early *netsuke-shi* there are only two who were in any way connected with the dentist's profession.

It may appear that disproportionate attention is here devoted to the question of the origin of the *netsuke* and the *ōjime*, but the fact is that no objects of art found in Japan are more essentially Japanese, whether their range of fanciful motives be considered, or the extraordinary dexterity of their carvers, or their originality. India, borrowing the art from Persia, developed much skill in carving, piercing, and inlaying long before the Japanese *netsuke* came into existence, and the Chinese, from an early epoch, sculptured tusks and slabs of ivory in the most elaborate manner, carrying their craft to the extent of cutting puzzle-balls, one inside the other, out of a single piece of ivory. But the Japanese *netsuke* and *ōjime* belong to an entirely different category from the productions of India, China, or Persia. No one thinks of making a collection of the latter: half-a-dozen specimens suffice to illustrate the art of each country; a greater number would be wearisome. In the case of the *netsuke*, however, it is scarcely possible to possess too many. Inevitably the same subject is often repeated

ONE OF THE DEVA KINGS GUARDING THE GATE AT THE TEMPLE TODAI-JI.

(See page 113.)

Sculptor Kwaikei, pupil of Unkei, 1180-1220.



without marked variation of treatment; but the range of conception is so large, the motives display such a wealth of fancy, realistic, conventional, grave, humorous, and grotesque, that the collector perpetually finds some new source of admiration, instruction, or amusement. If Japan had given to the world nothing but the *netsuke*, there would still be no difficulty in differentiating the bright versatility of her national genius from the comparatively sombre, mechanic, and unimaginative temperament of the Chinese. These delightful statuettes often represent deities, figures from the myth-land of Taoism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism, demons, gnomes, and other subjects already found in the gallery of familiar sculptures. But they also represent scenes from the homely, every-day life of the people, so simply and realistically treated that they play in glyptic art the same rôle as *genre* painting does in pictorial. Their carvers drew further inspiration from the whole range of natural objects. Birds, animals, reptiles, leaves, flowers, fishes, and insects all were reproduced with extraordinary fidelity and artistic taste. The *netsuke*, the *ukiyo-ye*, and the chromo-xylograph, which have already been discussed, and the sword-furniture which will be presently described, prove conclusively what a profound sense of beauty and instinct of art must have permeated the whole mass of the Japanese people, and how the best qualities of the decorative artist were educated to such an extent as ultimately to become innate in craftsman and critic alike.

Ivory has been spoken of above as though it were the principal material of the *netsuke*. But the best work was done in wood — cherry-wood, boxwood, sandalwood (*shitan*), or ebony (*kokutan*). Bone, horn

(deer, antelope, or ox), vegetable and walrus ivory, peach-stones, walnuts, and the skull of the crane (*hōten*) were also used. Perhaps the finest carving is to be found in cherry-wood *netsuke*, though those in boxwood derive special beauty from the silky texture assumed by the surface when carefully polished. Walnuts and peach-stones were generally chiselled in low relief, the favourite subjects being *semin* (Taoist genii), arhats (disciples of Buddha), the Seven Deities of Fortune, Benten and her children, and other motives involving a number of figures. The skull of the Chinese crane, which resembles snow-white wax marked with fine hair-lines, receives a certain mysterious admiration from ignorant Japanese, who, judging by its name, — the heavenly phœnix, — associate it with the fabulous hōō (phœnix). It has always been comparatively rare, and was a favourite material for carving masks, especially that of the jolly, sensuous goddess Uzume, or the fabulous Bacchanalian man-monkey, Shōjō — the blood-red plates on either side of the skull being cleverly brought into the scheme of the carving so as to represent the hair of the divinity or the monster.

The earliest carvers of *netsuke* were evidently influenced by considerations of utility. They saw that to serve its purpose of sustaining the girdle-pendant the *netsuke* should have greater length than bulk, and they accordingly took their designs from old legends telling of supernatural or monstrous beings, — flying dragons, lamp-bearing demons, the dragon god, the demon-slayer (*Shōki*), Kwan Yu (the Chinese god of war), the *kirin*, the Taoist genii, and such things. Their figure subjects were always amply draped, the nude being tabooed by the sculptor as

well as by the painter. Great skill was exercised in the treatment of the drapery and the pose of the figure. But it was on the chiselling of the face that the artist expended most care, and the result justified his toil; for he succeeded in producing wonderful conceptions of the wrinkled recluse, the semi-savage and wholly appalling dragon-deity, the relentless yet beneficent demon-slayer, the malevolent ogre, the phrensied thunder-god, and the inane elf of the mountains. Very soon he extended his repertoire of motives. Masks naturally suggested themselves as capable of being grouped into various shapes, and *netsuke* of that form are often of the highest quality. Then followed carvings of the Seven Deities of Fortune, sometimes singly, sometimes grouped together; of *saru-gaku* dancers; of fishes and aquatic plants; of mermaids; of men in armour; of the twelve signs of the zodiac; of barn-door fowl, and so forth. Foreign influence, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, seems to have temporarily checked the development of Japanese fancy in this branch of art, for it became fashionable to use the handles of Chinese seals, and sometimes the whole seal, as a *netsuke*. The Japanese, when they obey their own instincts, are seldom guilty of a solecism. They would not have appended a seal to a tobacco-pouch as a proper adjunct. But if the fact be recalled that the *inro* was originally a receptacle for a seal and for a little box of vermilion-ink paste, it is easy to understand how Chinese seals came to be regarded as appropriate toggles for the *inro*, and how their employment in that capacity was extended to the tobacco-pouch. In Chinese work of this description there is a total absence of the naturalistic pathos, playful idealism, and human interest, which charac-

terise the Japanese. The Chinese sculptor is not without humour, but his fancy seems to be always trammelled by grim practicality and narrow conventionalism. His influence upon Japanese sculptors was not wholesome, and they soon rebelled against it. Here, however, there is one point that attracts attention. The Chinese had a certain appreciation of the nude in sculpture. Among these seal-handle carvings — which, it must be remembered, were considered worthy of the finest workmanship that could be bestowed on them and of the costliest material available — nude female figures occur not infrequently. But it would be very difficult to determine whether grace of form or sensuous suggestion was the sculptor's objective in choosing such motives. His manner of treatment leaves the question exceedingly doubtful. At all events, he found no imitators in Japan. The nude never appealed to the Japanese sculptor. His realistic creed often appears in his manner of disposing the drapery of a peasant mother's dress or the skirts of a lady caught in a gust of wind and rain, but it is evident either that he failed to appreciate the exquisite curves of the female form, though in all other directions beauty and force of line constitute his special excellence, or that he associated the nude with the erotic. There is a pornographic side to his work, but it is of the most unequivocal character. He never stood upon that hazy border line of æstheticism and voluptuousness that runs through the whole of Occidental art from the times of Tanagra to the days of Giacometti and Hermann François.

By the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, the range of the *netsuke-*

carver's motives had extended into the every-day life of the people, into the realm of birds, flowers, insects, shells, and all other natural objects, and into the sphere of history. It is hopeless to attempt any classification. Nor, indeed, would anything be gained by such an effort. The *netsuke* derives its value, in the first place, from the skill of the sculptor; in the second, from the nature of the motive. It would be as impossible to lay down hard-and-fast rules for the collector's guidance as to construct a useful formula for judging the merits of a picture. Many people attach great importance to the age of a *netsuke*, and, possessing specimens which they believe to be old, are complacently confident that nothing new can be good. That is a pure delusion. A *netsuke* gains nothing from age. It is true that ivory, like bronze, develops in time a patina, a soft-brown glow, which is justly prized. But the same colour can be produced by "treatment," the same superficial texture by friction, and, as a matter of fact, both are produced abundantly in the workshop of the forger. On the other hand, there are a score of artists in modern Japan who can carve a *netsuke* not inferior in any respect to the best types of former times. The skill has not been lost; it is merely exercised in other directions. Age, then, is valuable solely as an assistance to identifying the work of celebrated masters who flourished in past centuries. Imitations were less frequent in former eras than in the present, and if a *netsuke* bearing the signature of Miwa, of Tomochika, of Issai, or some other great expert, is unquestionably old, its age becomes a partial justification for crediting the genuineness of the signature. Only partial, however, for from the time — a hundred and fifty years

ago — when the names of *netsuke*-carvers were first thought worthy of historical record, their works began to be copied, even to the signatures, and though a little care should guarantee the collector against mistaking for old masterpieces the begrimed, medicated, and comparatively rough forgeries of modern times, a combination of age and the *cachet* of a renowned master does not prove that the work is not an imitation, and should never be deemed sufficient evidence of excellence. Quality is everything. There must be not only delicacy and finish, together with strength of line and accuracy of detail, but there must also be eloquent vitality, simple directness of treatment, grace of conception, and, in a majority of cases, an element of humour. Certain favourite designs have been produced again and again, — a group of rats or rabbits; *Shōki*, the demon-slayer; an imp hiding under *Shōki's* discarded hat; the fight of the three blind shampooers; a wild bear among reeds; Watanabe and the demon; *Daruma* roused from his pious reverie by a rat; a monkey with its paw caught by a giant clam; an old man sneezing; a mountain elf (*tengu*) emerging from an egg-shell; the fight between Benkei and Yoshitsune; Urajima and the casket of longevity; New-Year mummers (*manzai*); groups of tortoises; *saru-gaku* dancers; the Dog of Fo (*shishi*) and peonies; a boy peeping through the mouth of a *shishi* mask; a cicada on a dead twig; a snail crawling on its shell; a peasant woman carrying a child; wrestlers; Otafuke, the vulgar Venus, washing her neck at a tub; *Kagura* dancers; monkeys and peaches; a bee on a gourd; the Lady Tokiwa and her three children journeying through the snow; an owl on a decayed stump; a

puppy dog and a dragon-fly; the badger-bewitched pot; a rat gnawing a candle; a cicada shell on a walnut; the Seven Wise Men in the bamboo grove; frogs in all kinds of positions; a cock perched on a tile or a drum — each and every one of these used to exist by scores in Japan before dilettanti from Europe and America came to carry them away. But among a dozen specimens representing the same motive a little accuracy of observation will soon enable the connoisseur to recognise that one is incomparably superior to the other eleven. There is no special difficulty in carving rats, or rabbits, or cocks and hens, or imps, but the difference between a group of rats or rabbits by Rantei, for example, or Terutsugu, and the same group chiselled by a modern copyist who manufactures for the Western market, is that in one case the animals are instinct with life and motion; in the other, they are tame and nerveless. The same criticism applies throughout. Even a tortoise by Tomokazu is a vital, crawling creature, just as the discarded shell of a cicada by Rakuchika is seen to be a mere shell before its hollowness has been observed. No wise collector will trouble himself about names and dates until he has first become convinced that a *netsuke* has artistic claims to such attention.

For the satisfaction of collectors special mention may be made of a variety of *netsuke* which has caused some perplexity, though as an object of art it has no merit whatever. The subject is an uncouth figure, from three to six inches high and therefore of unusually large dimensions, wearing a strange costume and obviously intended to represent a foreigner. The material is generally of lacquered wood or bone, but in rare instances ivory is used, and the size of the *netsuke*

has induced some persons to suppose that it did not serve for supporting a girdle-pendant. But, as will be seen just now when pipes and pouches are spoken of, there are certain classes among the lower orders of Japanese who affect everything on a large and obtrusive scale. These persons found a big ponderous *netsuke* quite to their taste, and were moreover pleased that it should have a rude, portentous aspect. The carver, therefore, had recourse to the popular idea of a foreigner, — a Dutchman for the most part, — and endeavoured to impart to the figure a suggestion of all the solecisms of dress and manners that the outer barbarian was supposed to perpetrate. If the average Japanese connoisseur be asked to identify these grotesque figures, he replies off-hand that they are *Namban-jin*, or "southern barbarians," a term originally applied to all aliens coming from regions southward of Japan, but ultimately used with special reference to the Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Dutch. But the fact is that the Japanese recognised several conventional types of half-civilised outsiders, and often borrowed the characteristics of three or four to form a specially unlovely and confused compound. There was the "Orangai" of the Amur region with his sack-like garment of woolly hide, his feathered and furred cap, and his Chinese face. There was the "Ezo-jin," with his hirsute visage, monstrous features, semi-Occidental costume, and savage aspect. There was the "Dattan" of Tartary, a ferocious edition of the "Orangai," with voluminous ears, repulsively ugly features, fur-bristling robes, bow of vast strength and arrows three feet long. There was the "Taiwan-jin" of Formosa, with whiskers, moustache, and imperial ornamenting a vacuous face; his costume a

skull cap, a necklace, and a loin cloth; his weapon a spear. There were the people of "Kōchi" (Cochin China) and Tonkin, with tonsured pates, long robes, expansive pantaloons, bare feet, and a peculiar kind of short, double-barbed spear clasped in their arms. It would appear that a general idea of these various "barbarian" characteristics floated in the mind of the Japanese sculptor, and that he combined them according to the dictates of his fancy when required to carve *netsuke* for the portly pouch and ponderous pipe of the professional stalwart.

A word must be said about the general form of the *netsuke*. Speaking broadly, there are only two kinds. There is first the *netsuke* whose shape is determined by that of the object represented. This is the most frequent and also the finest type. The *netsuke* is then a statuette, and the modelling must be perfect from every point of view. The second kind may be called the "button *netsuke*" (known in Japan as *manju* or *riusa*). It is either a solid circular disc of ivory, wood, or bone, covered, more or less profusely, with designs sculptured in high or low relief; or it is an unornamented disc of the same materials framing a metal plate to which alone the decoration is applied. The chiselling of these metal plates (*kagami-buta*) fell to the task not of the *netsuke*-maker but of the goldsmith (*kinzoku-shi*), to whom there will presently be occasion to refer. As to the first kind of button-*netsuke*, it varies greatly in size, some being as much as three inches in diameter, and others not more than one inch. The common size is about an inch and a half. In the case of these *netsukes* the artist had to decorate a surface only; a much easier achievement than the chiselling of the

statuette-*netsuke*. But with that reservation his work merits high admiration, and is, further, more uniformly excellent than the work of the statuette sculptor. Wonderful skill is shown in producing effects of space and gradations of distance by varying the degree of relief or incision, and the most delicate elaboration of detail is found in combination with purity of design and directness of method.

The *netsuke* and the *ōjime* are not the only objects of beauty connected with girdle-pendants. Quite as much artistic skill was lavished upon the *inro*. This gem of workmanship properly belongs, however, to the category of lacquer manufactures, and will be again referred to in that context. The glyptic artist did not, as a rule, apply his talents to its decoration. But there are many exceptions; notably *inro* in ivory. Sometimes the whole surface of an ivory *inro* is covered with a deeply chiselled design of flying cranes, or a herd of monkeys, or a mob of horses. Sometimes it is made of strips of ivory woven after the fashion of a bamboo basket; sometimes of ebony or *shitan* (red sandalwood),[1] chiselled in landscapes, diapers, arabesques, battle-scenes, or mythological subjects; sometimes the *inro* itself fits into a thin metal shell, with decoration elaborately chased or chiselled in relief and pierced throughout so as to reduce the weight and show the *inro* within.[2] It would be an endless task to make detailed reference to the innumerable happy conceptions of the Japanese craftsman in this branch of his work. One of the delights of collecting Japanese objects of virtu is that surprises may always be expected. The repertoire of novelties is never exhausted.

[1] See Appendix, note 21.

[2] See Appendix, note 22.

Much that has been said above about the *inro* and the *netsuke* applies also to the pipe (*kiseru*), the pipe-case (*kiseru-zutsu*), and the tobacco-pouch (*tobacco-ire*). The pipe, from having originally been a ponderous clumsy affair, sometimes carried over the shoulder and serviceable as a weapon, gradually dwindled to tiny proportions, and began to command the attention of the decorative artist. It must be noted, however, that the aristocratic pipe is never a highly ornate affair. Its most approved form has always been a central joint of polished reed, carrying a long mouthpiece and a diminutive bowl, both of gold, silver, or one of the compound metals which the Japanese manufacture with such unique skill. The bowl and mouthpiece occasionally have decoration, — engraved or inlaid pictures, diapers or arabesques, translucid enamelling in cloissons, or chaste designs in low relief, — but in the great majority of cases the metal sections, with the exception of the end of the mouthpiece, have their surface uniformly hammered in one of the "stone-grain" diapers by-and-by to be described. There have passed into foreign collections a number of massive and comparatively large pipes, — sometimes made entirely of silver, or of the greyish white metal called *shibuichi;* sometimes having a central joint of reed — on the decoration of which the chisel of the sculptor has been employed to produce strikingly ornate effects. Such pipes are never used by gentlemen and ladies in Japan. They have always been the exclusive property of the wrestler, who loves to have everything colossal; of the professional gambler and the swashbuckling *chevalier d'industrie;* of the *tōryō*, who stands at the head of a guild of workmen in virtue of his expert muscles and courageous

masterfulness; and of that peculiar clan of stalwarts, represented in feudal times by the *otoko-date*, a genuine redresser of wrongs and champion of the weak, but in modern days by the greatly degenerate *sōshi*, who aims at being a political reformer, but seldom rises above the level of a hireling bully. The pouches that accompany these big pipes are of correspondingly large dimensions, and have metal clasps which, as specimens of fine glyptic work and clever designing, deserve the special attention that collectors have bestowed on them.[1] The same remark applies to the clasps of smaller pouches, carried by every-day folks. But as the chiselling of these objects falls to the task of the maker of sword-furniture, they will be further noticed in the latter context.

The pouch itself was generally of leather, fur, skin, or some rare textile fabric. There were nearly a hundred recognised varieties of choice material, each having its duly defined points, and each designated by a special name. Attention may be directed here to a feature which will be further illustrated by-and-by, — the extraordinary wealth of nomenclature presented by the Japanese vocabulary of decorative art. How many kinds of leather, or cloth, or silken fabric, suitable for the cover of a tobacco-pouch or a pocket-book, could an American or European expert indicate by means of a terminology that would be immediately intelligible to the person addressed? A score and a half would probably exhaust the list. Yet, in a well-known Japanese work compiled at the close of the eighteenth century, no less than ninety-three varieties are separately designated and described. There is, of course, no occasion to enter into any

[1] See Appendix, note 23.

detailed account of the nature and appearance of these materials. What is interesting is to note, first, the lesson taught by their great variety, — the immense care bestowed by the Japanese upon an article comparatively so unimportant as the tobacco-pouch,[1] — and secondly, that they were the means of introducing some distinctly foreign elements into Japanese decorative art. For the great majority of these materials were imported, from India, from Holland, from Persia, from China, from Siam and other countries, and the designs impressed, woven, or embroidered upon them not only were emphatically alien, but also in many instances represented bizarre conceptions, crudely worked out, and falling far below the standards of decorative excellence to which the Japanese had themselves attained. But there has always been in Japan an affection for the quaint and the archaic. It owes its origin to the cult of the tea-clubs, and its effect upon the art of the country was in some respects vitiating. Thus in the case of these imported leathers and stuffs, when the materials themselves were not actually employed, their designs were occasionally taken by the glyptic artist as the most appropriate motive for decorating the surface of the pouch or the pipe-case, and the result is that these objects, when made of wood, ivory, horn, or bamboo, sometimes present a style of decoration without any Japanese affinities and with very little to recommend it from an artistic point of view. On the whole, however, the use of hard substances — bamboo, ebony, *shitan*, betel-nut, palm, ivory, or horn — for the manufacture of pouches was exceptional. In the case of ivory, a favourite though seldom practised method was to cut

[1] See Appendix, note 24.

the material in fine strips and weave them in basket meshes, the technical difficulty constituting the *chic* of the article. An ivory, ebony, or bamboo surface carved so as to be indistinguishable from basket work was also prized, and, for the rest, many quaint and pretty methods of sculpture and decoration were employed; but, on the whole, the tobacco pouch itself, apart from its appendages, was the least ornate of the girdle-pendants.

The pipe-case (*kiseruzutsu*) is another of Japan's glyptic triumphs. M. Gonse justly says that there are few objects on which Japanese artists have expended more consideration and taste. In form it is very simple — a slightly flattened tube, the upper portion of which slips into the lower in such a manner as to be gripped more tightly the further it is inserted. The material is ebony, bamboo, sandalwood, horn, ivory, lacquered wood, and sometimes metal. Carved with exquisite care and taste in high relief, elaborately engraved, inlaid with various substances, or overlaid with applied ornaments, the pipe-case is unquestionably a charming specimen of decorative art. It must not be supposed, however, that richness and profusion of ornamentation are regarded as evidences of excellence in Japan. M. Gonse, in an outburst of enthusiasm, refers to a pipe-case in the Goncourt collection as *le roi des étuis à pipe passés, présents et futures*, and describes it thus: "It is a bamboo tube, the rotundity slightly flattened, covered with a flight of dragon-flies. One cannot imagine anything more marvellously captivating, more sumptuous than this decoration, half in relief, half incised, enriched with enamel, with mother-of-pearl, and with coloured ivory; with gradations and effects of

background, obtained by the contrast between dragon-flies simply sculptured and dragon-flies of enamel and mother-of-pearl in the foreground." Such work is doubtless very beautiful to Western eyes, but a classical Japanese connoisseur would turn from it with disdain. Some thirty years ago, there lived a sculptor, named Hashi-ichi, then in his old age. His specialty was to imitate bamboo: to reproduce in box-wood, in ebony, or in *shitan* the joints, the texture, the graining, and all the other characteristics of the bamboo. If one of Hashi-ichi's unadorned pipe-cases together with M. Gonse's "king of past, of present, and of future pipe-cases," were offered to a Japanese connoisseur, he would choose the former unhesitatingly, for the profuse decoration which appeals to Occidental eyes represents a comparatively modern period of Japanese art, and is not always in harmony with the best Japanese canons. Some specimens there are, indeed, in which wealth of design and purity of conception are happily combined, and the decoration is nobly rich without any hint of meretriciousness. But seldom, very seldom indeed, did a Japanese craftsman of the first class attempt to build up designs with such a *mélange* of substances as mother-of-pearl, coloured ivory, and enamel. In operations of that patchwork, dovetailing, finikin kind there was no room for vigour and directness of line or strength of chisel, nor could the decorator look to satisfy the highest canon of his art, — large effect with small effort. It will be readily understood that the pipe-case, the *netsuke*, the tobacco-pouch, and its appendages and ornaments were all *en suite*, all formed part of the same decorative scheme. They do not necessarily lose interest or

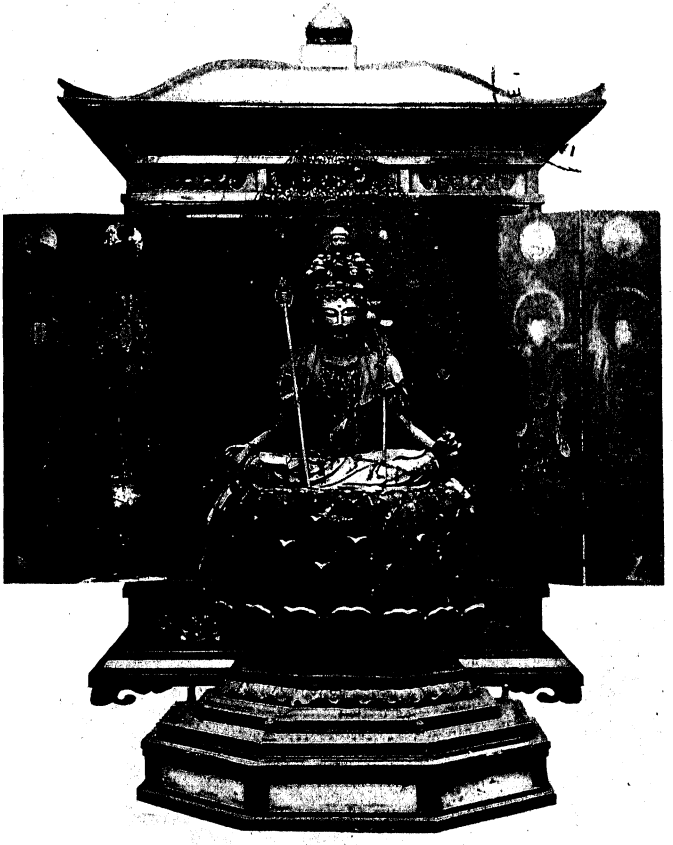
beauty by separation, though sometimes the story their design tells does not bear to be divided into fragments. There is nothing to be added in this context to what has already been said about the range of the *netsuke*-carver's decorative motives. The same craftsman undertook the chiselling of the *netsuke* and the pipe-case, and derived his designs from the same sources.

Mention may be conveniently made here of two objects which, although they have no connection with girdle-pendants, received their decoration from the hands of the latter's craftsman. They are the *kiyōji-tate* and the *kōgō*. The *kiyōji-tate*, though a very beautiful little affair, may be dismissed with a few words. It is a miniature vase, from three to four inches high, generally hexagonal in section, used for holding the delicate silver instruments of the incense-burning pastime. Made of silver, gold, silver-gilt, and sometimes *shakudo* or *shibuichi*, its sides are almost invariably chiselled in reticulated diapers, scrolls, or arabesques, but it owes its attraction rather to grace of form, highly finished technique, and delicacy of decorative design than to excellence of sculpture. The *kōgō* is a tiny box for holding cakes of incense. Like the *inro*, it belongs primarily to the domain of lacquer manufacture. But there are many specimens in metal or ivory with sculptured decoration, incised or in relief, of such fine design and choice workmanship that they deserve to be classed among the best *chefs-d'œuvre* of glyptic art.

Who were the men that carved these beautiful objects, so essentially Japanese, and what inspiration led the glyptic artist in the seventeenth century to make a departure analogous to that made by the

ELEVEN-FACED KWANNON IN SHRINE, FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

(See page 139.)



pictorial artist of the *Toba-ye* in the twelfth? There is no escape from the general conclusion that Japanese art derived its motives and its methods from foreign sources, but, on the other hand, both in sculpture and in painting it shows developments which owe nothing to alien suggestion, and must be placed to the sole credit of Japanese genius. That distinction has already been noted with regard to the *Ukiyo-ye* (genre-picture), and its truth in the realm of sculpture is established partly by the works of Jōchō and his successors in the religious school, and completely by the carving of *netsuke* and girdle-pendants in general. The *netsuke* is a combination of the *Toba-ye* and the *Ukiyo-ye*. It shows all the humour of the former without the grotesque exaggerations of form, and it has all the naturalistic graces and human interest of the latter. There is nothing exactly corresponding to it in the sculpture of any other country, and one imagines that the first appearance of such an object ought to be historically recorded. But the difficulty that confronts the student in tracing any school of Japanese pictorial art to its source, presents itself in the case of the *netsuke* also: public attention was not directed to the new departure until its success had become conspicuous, and in the meanwhile the pioneers had passed out of sight and memory. There is a vague Japanese tradition that the first sculptor who made a specialty of *netsuke*-carving was one Ri-fū-ho of Kyōtō. He is said to have flourished from 1625 to 1670. "Ri-fū-ho" is not a family name or a personal name. It is one of the professional appellations which Japanese experts generally take. Nothing is known of the man or of his work. He is referred to also as "Hinaya," and some English writers have

assumed that the latter was an alternative name. But "hina-ye" signifies "a maker of *hina;*" that is to say, of the puppets set up at the Girls' Fête on the fifth day of the fifth month. These little figures did not call for much exercise of glyptic skill. Their costumes and all the accessories of the various characters they represented were of the most accurate and elaborate nature. Processions of feudal chiefs with every miniature squire and man-at-arms caparisoned exactly as he would be in life, and with all the paraphernalia of travel reproduced microscopically; wedding ceremonials, from the feast with its refined conventionalism when the loving-cup was exchanged, to the bride's first return to the abode of her parents; scenes from the history of filial piety or from the pages of mythology, folk-lore, or fable; in short, an endless repertoire of subjects offered itself for the choice of the maker of *hina*, and since these little figures with their accompaniments are exact reproductions of Japanese costume, customs, weapons, armour, household utensils, and what not, they are greatly and deservedly prized by foreign collectors. But they cannot be called works of art: they are simply the most elaborate and naturalistic dolls ever made in any country. Generally the figures were of wood, but in the choicest specimens ivory was used for the faces, hands, and feet. Sums corresponding to many hundreds of sovereigns were occasionally expended upon these *hina* by great and wealthy families, in order that some pet daughter might celebrate her fête with sufficiently triumphal delight; for it must be observed that the little ladies, wearing gala frocks, visited each other's displays of *hina* during many days, and that the "grown-ups" of the district

took scarcely less pride and pleasure in this feature of the fête. Nothing was more natural than that a maker of *hina* should turn to the more artistic but somewhat cognate pursuit of *netsuke*-carving. For the rest, however, nothing can be predicated about the traditional Ri-fū-yo. No specimens of his work are known to have survived, and if he took the elaborate *hina* as a model, his immediate successors did not follow his example. According to an appendix to the *Sōken Kishō* (Treatise on Sword-Furniture), compiled by Michitaku and published in June, 1781, the first carver of *netsuke* was the well-known painter Tosa Mitsuoki, who died in the year 1691. He had the rank of *Hōgen*, and his art name was Shūzan. The *Sōken Kishō* says of him: —

Hōgen Shuzan lived at Shima-no-uchi in Ōsaka. All the *netsuke* carved by this artist are coloured. Many imitations have been made, but none has the qualities possessed by works from the artistic hands of the skilled painter.

Note by Kinshi Hōzan, son of Shuzan: "My father, who is artistically known as *Hōgen* Shuzan, was called Mitsuoki, or Tansenso, and enjoyed a high reputation as a painter. He was very fond of carving, and loved to reproduce, with due alterations of enlargement or reduction, the quaintest and most unusual figures shown in the *Sankaikyo* (shapes from the mountain and the ocean) or the *Ressaiden* (annals of Rishi). In fact, any figure that he fancied took shape under his chisel. His scheme of colouring was so excellent that ordinary folks can have no conception of it. But as he ceased to carve after reaching middle life, his works are very scarce and of correspondingly high value. Ina Michitaku, a friend of mine, who has been recently engaged compiling the *Shōken Kishō*, with an appendix on *netsuke*, has asked my permission to publish some of my father's carvings, together with those of some other artists. I desire to comply with his wishes, but unfortunately these old and

rare carvings are not to be obtained easily, being preciously treasured up by their possessors. Hence there is nothing at hand really suitable for publication. I have thought, however, that since my father carved only as a pastime in the intervals of his work as a painter, his reputation will suffer no injury by letting the public see even such mediocre specimens of his glyptic work as happen to be available. Hence I have sketched a few and sent them to my friend."

It will be observed that already in the year 1781 the *netsuke* carved by Shūzan were very scarce, that all his works were coloured (from which it may be inferred that the only material employed by him was wood), and that imitations were numerous even during the lifetime of the immediately succeeding generations. Indeed, the fact that a *netsuke* carries the name of one of the early celebrities ought generally to inspire distrust, and to suggest possibly the work of an inferior craftsman without either reputation or skill to justify the use of his own name.

It is frequently alleged that no good *netsuke* have been made in modern times: a conception derived, doubtless, from the fact that after the opening of the country to foreign intercourse in 1857, the *netsuke* ceasing, on the one hand, to be valued by the Japanese themselves, and becoming, on the other, an object of curiosity and admiration to foreigners, hundreds of inferior specimens were chiselled by inexpert hands, purchased wholesale by treaty-port merchants, and sent to New York, London, and Paris, where, though they brought profit to the exporter, they also disgusted connoisseurs and soon earned discredit for their whole class. But it was a mistake to conclude from

these parodies that the sculptor had lost his old ability. He still retained it, though its exercise was circumscribed, and in Tōkyō, Ōsaka, and Kyōtō *netsukes* of high quality continued to be produced. During recent years the artists have turned their attention to a somewhat different class of object, the *okimono*, or statuette, but it is not to be supposed that they are a whit inferior to the old-time experts in conception and execution. The collector may be satisfied that a *netsuke* bearing the signature of a comparatively modern artist is not necessarily inferior to a genuine specimen by Seibei, Tomtoda, Miwa, or Issai.

The passing reference already made to *Nara ningyo* (puppets of Nara) requires to be briefly supplemented. Visitors to the celebrated temples of Nara find for sale there some roughly chiselled wooden figures, two or three inches high, generally representing the old couple of Takasago and a few other familiar motives. The figures are painted in two or three colours. They can scarcely be called art objects, but belong rather to the category of toys. Yet they are connected with a once flourishing industry which occupies a prominent place in the history of Japanese wood-carving. In 1588, when the *Taikō* had the honour of receiving a visit from the Emperor in the newly constructed "Palace of Pleasure" at Fushimi, he ordered the sculptors of Nara to exert their utmost skill in producing a congratulatory carving which should stand in the alcove of the reception chamber. The form of such an object was limited by tradition to the *shimadai*, or "island-stand," a motive derived from the Japanese cosmogony in which the creator and the creatrix, Izanami and Izanagi, are

supposed to have begotten the island of Onokoro, when the male and female principles first came into active existence. The divine feat is represented in art by a gracefully shaped stand, more or less elaborately decorated, on which are placed two figures of an aged man and woman, as well as a group of plum, bamboo, and pine trees, with accessories in the shape of cranes and tortoises. The figures are the spirits of the ancient pine-trees of Takasago and Sumiyoshi, and the whole combination is emblematic of longevity, prosperity, happiness, and undying affection. The *Taikō's* commission to prepare this alcove ornament was given to Yemon Tazayemon, a sculptor of Nara, and the *shima-dai* there produced — *Nara-dai*, as it is often called — is popularly said to have been the origin of the afterwards celebrated *Nara-ningyo*. But here, again, the student detects a tendency common in Japanese art-annals, the tendency to mistake the first public recognition of an industry for its origin. The plum, the pine, the bamboo, the tortoise, the crane, and the spirits of the ancient trees, of Sumiyoshi and Takasago, had symbolised long life, prosperity, and enduring conjugal love for centuries prior to the building of the ill-fated Momoyamagoten at Fushimi, and innumerable *shima-hai*[1] had been prepared for wedding ceremonies before Hideyoshi gave a commission to the Nara sculptors. Indeed, close examination of the records shows that *Nara-ningyo* were manufactured as early as the year 1135, on the occasion of the first great Kasuga festival, when the image of the god Waka-miya was moved to a new shrine; and tradition says that in their origin — which was not later than the middle of the tenth century —

[1] See Appendix, note 25.

these little figures partook of the nature of amulets, having been carved out of the old timbers of the sacred bridge leading to the temples, when the bridge was renewed for the first time. It was an article of popular faith that all these little figures were made from bridge-wood which had been hallowed during long years by the tread of priests and the passage of festival processions, but since the bridge did not require renewing more than once in fifty years, whereas every pilgrim visiting Nara carried away one of the images, faith must have been substituted for fact in an immense number of cases. Let the timber be what it might, however, the sculptor had to observe one rule unfailingly: he was required to fashion the object with a minimum use of the chisel. Perfect success in that respect was supposed to be attained when the tool was never applied a second time to the same place.[1] Thus the *Nara-ningyo* stood to sculpture in the same relation as that of the Indian-ink sketch to painting. These figures do not appear to have attracted much attention in æsthetic circles until the *Taikō*'s example, as described above, being followed by the nobility as well as by wealthy commoners, gave a great impulse to the art of the *himono-shi*.[2] From that time the chiselling of *Nara-ningyo* became a flourishing industry, the range of motives being gradually extended and the colouring executed with care and taste. Some of these figures were richly lacquered, and when thus decorated they received the name of *Negoro-ningyo*. In the early part of the nineteenth century, an expert sculptor named Okano Hohaku gave a wider range to his art by chiselling characters from the classic mimes, — the *bugaku*, the *gigaku*,

[1] See Appendix, note 26.

[2] See Appendix, note 27.

and the *nogaku*, — and in 1830 Kambayashi Rakkiken, a *cha-no-yu* celebrity, who resided in Uji, attracted attention by chiselling representations of girls engaged in the processes of tea-manufacture. These *Uji-ningyo*, as they are called, often stand on a very high plane of artistic feeling and technical skill.

The latest development of figure-sculpture in Japan prior to the *Meiji era* was the *Asakusa-ningyo*, so called from the name of the place (Asakusa in Yedo) where the sculptor, Fukushima Kagan, lived, and where his works were usually exhibited. The *Asakusa-ningyo* was generally a life-size figure, representing some historical or mythical character. Draped in appropriate garments, these *ningyo* were grouped so as to form traditional scenes, and admission to the gallery where they stood could be obtained on payment of a small fee. This was the Madame Toussaud's of Japan. Generally the *ningyo* were modelled in clay,[1] but whatever the material, they were little better than large puppets, raised above doll level by the clever modelling of their faces and hands. Such a branch of technical sculpture would scarcely deserve notice save for its association with Matsumoto Kisaburo (1830–1869), who is frequently spoken of by Western connoisseurs as the greatest wood-carver of modern Japan. Certainly he was the most realistic, for he carved human figures with as much accuracy as though they were destined for purposes of surgical demonstration. Considering that this man had neither education nor anatomical instruction, and that he never enjoyed an opportunity of studying from a model in a studio, his achievements were remarkable. He and the craftsmen of

[1] See Appendix, note 28.

the school he established, completely refute the theory that the anatomical defects commonly seen in the work of Japanese sculptors are due to faulty observation. Without scientific training of any kind, Matsumoto and his followers produced works in which the eye of science cannot detect any error. But it is impossible to admit within the circle of high-art productions these wooden figures of every-day men and women, unrelieved by any subjective element and owing their merit entirely to the fidelity with which their contours are shaped, their muscles modelled, and their anatomical proportions preserved. They have not even the attraction of being cleanly sculptured in wood, but are covered with thinly lacquered muslin, which, though doubtless a good preservative, accentuates their puppet-like character. Nevertheless Matsumoto's figures marked an epoch in Japanese wood sculpture. Their vivid realism appealed strongly to the taste of the average foreigner; a considerable school of carvers soon began to work in the Matsumoto style, and hundreds of their productions have gone to Europe and America, finding no market in Japan. The greatest of these modern experts is Yamamoto Fukumatsu. He reaches the level of Matsumoto Kisaburo.

Midway between the Matsumoto realistic school and the pure Japanese style of former times, stand a number of wood-carvers headed by Takamura Kōun, who occupies in the field of sculpture much the same place as that held by Hashimoto Gaho in the realm of painting. Kōun carves figures in the round, which not only display great power of chisel and breadth of style, but also tell a story not necessarily drawn from the motives of the classical school. This de-

parture from established canons must be traced to the influence of the short-lived academy of Italian art established by the Japanese Government in 1874. In the forefront of the new movement are to be found men like Yoneharu Unkai and Shinkai Takejiro, the former of whom chiselled a figure of Jenner for the Medical Association of Japan when they celebrated the centenary of the great physician, and the latter has carved life-size likeness effigies of Princes Arisugawa and Kitashirakawa who lost their lives in the war of 1894–1895. The artists of the Kōun school, however, do much work which appeals to emotions in general rather than to individual memories. Thus Arakawa Reiun, one of Kōun's most brilliant pupils, recently exhibited a figure of a swordsman in the act of driving home a furious thrust. The weapon is not shown. Reiun sculptured simply a man poised on the toes of one foot, the other foot raised, the arm extended, and the body straining forward in strong yet elastic muscular effort. This carving emphasises the advantage of not working from a model. A posed figure could not possibly suggest the alert vitality and high muscular tension of the swordsman. A more imaginative work by the same artist is a figure of a farmer who has just shot an eagle that swooped upon his grandson. The old man holds his bow still raised. Some of the eagle's feathers, blown to his side, suggest the death of the bird; at his feet lies the corpse of the little boy, and the horror, grief, and anger that such a tragedy would inspire are depicted with striking realism in the farmer's face. Work of that nature has close affinities with Occidental conceptions. Its chief distinguishing feature is that the glyptic character is preserved at the ex-

pense of surface-finish. The undisguised touches of the chisel tell a story of technical force and directness which could not be suggested by perfectly smooth surfaces. To subordinate process to result is the European canon. To show the former without marring the latter is the Japanese ideal. Many of Kōun's sculptures appear unfinished to eyes trained in Occidental galleries, whereas the Japanese connoisseur detects evidence of a technical feat in their seeming roughness.

Architectural decoration in Europe and America ought to provide much employment for the Japanese wood-carver. In his own country temples, shrines, and mausolea used to offer a wide field for his chisel; but since feudalism fell and since the State turned its back upon religion, the greatly reduced revenues of sacred edifices barely suffice for their support and leave no margin for their embellishment. There has not, however, been any diminution of the old glyptic skill and originality. On the contrary, at least as much talent as ever is now available. Formerly a large part of the decorative sculpture for temples and mausolea was done in sections, which were afterwards pieced together with nails and glue. Examples of that method may be seen in some of the most effective carvings of the Nikkō mausolea. The head and neck of a phœnix, for instance, are sculptured in three or four segments, and the tail-feathers in five or six. Elaborate chiselling in relief on a solid ground was seldom attempted in wood, admirable as was the work of that kind achieved in metal. But at glyptic exhibitions in Tōkyō during recent years beautiful specimens of solid carvings in relief have been shown. Such work, if judiciously applied

to the interiors of foreign buildings, must be highly attractive, and the cost would be comparatively small, for a very slender remuneration still satisfies the Japanese art artisan. Intelligent enterprise should find an opportunity here.

Chapter VI

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE

OF the three fields in which Japanese art may justly claim to have shown original genius, namely, the art of *genre* painting with its correlated achievements in chromo-xylography, the field of *netsuke* carving, and the field of sculpture as employed for the decoration of weapons of war, it is probably correct to say that the most remarkable work is found in the last.

There is a common belief that the decoration of arms and armour did not reach a high grade of excellence until the twelfth century of the Christian era. Japanese traditions, on the contrary, allege that the inlaying of armour with gold and silver began in the fourth century, but there is nothing to support the assertion. The armour found in dolmens shows no trace of inlaying, or of any elaborate ornamentation, and it may be said that the contents of these peculiar tombs, which represent the burial-places of Japanese chieftains and sovereigns down to, probably, the fifth century of the Christian era, did not give much promise of the extraordinary skill afterwards attained. Nevertheless it is certain that the sculptor must have occupied himself diligently with the decoration of armour long before the Gem-pei wars of the twelfth century, for a suit of mail worn by Yoshitsune, the hero of that time, which is preserved

in a temple at Nara, exhibits features of considerable decorative beauty. It is a combination of plate and chain defence, and the chiselling of the helmet, breastplate, and brassarts indicates that Japan possessed, at that comparatively early era, workers in metal not unworthy to rank with the sculptor of the Siris Bronzes. Indeed Yoshitsune's armour forcibly recalls that celebrated relic of the school of Praxiteles, for just as the Grecian artist adorned the shoulder-pieces of the armour with *repoussé* pictures of a combat between an Amazon and a warrior, so on Yoshitsune's shoulder-pieces the Japanese craftsman affixed *repousse* representations of the Dog of Fo, and on the helmet, flying pheasants. These adjuncts, however, are a minor feature in the case of the Japanese suit of mail. The chief characteristic is a wealth of designs — peony sprays, the well-known combination of plum, bamboo, and pine, chrysanthemum scrolls, and birds — in high relief, *à jour*, and in low relief. The craftsman who could execute such work had not much room for improvement, and indeed it is not surprising to know that a family which through many generations gave Japan her greatest artists in iron — the Miyōchin family — was founded by an armourer, and had a celebrated representative in the second half of the twelfth century.

While, however, this fine work was lavished on the decoration of armour certainly from the twelfth century and probably from an earlier date, the adornment of the sword did not receive commensurate attention until the fifteenth century, — a curious fact from the point of view of mere incongruity, but doubly curious when it is remembered that whereas armour was worn only on special occasions, the sword

had a perpetual place in the girdle, and possessed, moreover, a value which seems romantic until something is learned of its really wonderful capacities. The sword itself, not being an object of art, will not be discussed here, great as is the interest otherwise attaching to it. What has to be spoken of is sword-furniture. There it was that the Japanese worker in metals won his crown of skill. In the decoration that he lavished on the guard, the hilt, and other parts of the sword's mountings, he gave to the world peerless specimens of sculpture in metal and of metallurgic processes. There is nothing in the cognate work of any other nation that surpasses, perhaps nothing that equals, the masterpieces of Japan in this line. The scarabs of Etruria have been mentioned as in some degree parallel, just as the Tanagra statuettes have been classed with the *netsuke*. If it be permissible to place on the same artistic plane a terra-cotta figure cast in a mould and a carving in wood or ivory, then also it may not be extravagant to compare the pictures sculptured and painted — no other term can be justly used — on metal by decorators of Japanese swords to the intaglios of Etruscan gem-cutters. These are matters of taste not profitable to discuss, nor will any one who has had an opportunity of examining a really representative collection of Japanese sword-furniture experience the least difficulty in forming a final opinion. He will recognise that he is dealing with pictorial art applied to metal, and the longer he studies the subject the greater the charms it develops and the more numerous the surprises it affords. This eulogy is not intended to imply that there are to be found among articles of Japanese sword-furniture monumental specimens of decorative

metal-work worthy to be classed with objects such as the silver altar of the Florence baptistery, the candelabrum of the Milan Cathedral, the mediæval *rejas* of Spanish churches, and many of the other magnificent achievements of European artists in metal. The two classes of work are not comparable. One might as well place in the same category the dancing maidens of the walls of Herculaneum and the most delicate miniature paintings on ivory. It has, indeed, been asserted that the extraordinary labour of mind and hand lavished by the Japanese artist upon objects the biggest of which can be enclosed within a circle three inches in diameter, justifies the criticism that he belonged to a nation great in little things and little in great things. But if the Japanese sculptor of sword-furniture is to be accused of moral smallness because he applied himself to the production of tiny ornaments, the same charge may be preferred against Benvenuto Cellini, since so much of his fame rests on his enamelled jewelry. Whatever quality of mind the fact indicates, it is indisputable that the Japanese artist or art-artisan is the most conscientious in the world. He loves to expend the finest and most patient effort upon the least conspicuous portions of the object he ornaments, partly because loyalty to his art dictates such a sacrifice of labour, and partly because he thus enters a kind of noble protest against any suspicion of decorative ostentation which the beauty and richness of his work might otherwise suggest. That habit of craftsmanship is well illustrated in sword-furniture. The delicacy of chiselling and infinitely careful finish betowed on every detail delight the connoisseur as much as they astonish him. Admirable as is the *netsuke*-carver's work, the art of

NETSUKE.

(See page 177.)

1
Ivory.
By Meikeisai Hōjitsu.

2
Ivory.
By Hakuunsai.

3
Ivory.
Not marked.

4
Ivory and *Shibuichi.*
By Shūraku.

5
Ivory.
By Hōjitsu.
Subject, Hōtei and Children.

6
Ivory.
By Sukenaga.

7
Ivory.
By Sukenaga.
Subject, Daruma Sneezing.

8
Ivory.
By Tomokazu.
Subject, Demon catching Shōki under a basket.

9
Ivory and Wood.
By Kaigyaku and Mitsuhira.
Subject, Bell encrusted with shells.

10
Wood.
By Sukenaga.
Subject, Frog and Nut.

11
Ivory.
By Masanao.

12
Ivory.
By Okatomo.

13
Ivory.
By Hōjitsu.

14
Ivory.
By Hakuunsai.

15
Ivory.
By Hōjitsu.

16
Ivory and Metal.
Not marked.

17
Ivory.
By Chikuyōsai.

18
Ivory.
By Hōkyokumir

19
Ivory.
By Rantei.

20
Ivory.
By Kaigyokusai.

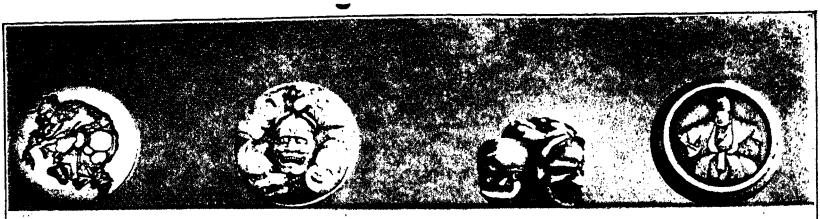
21
Ivory.
By Masatsugu.

22
Ivory.
Not marked.

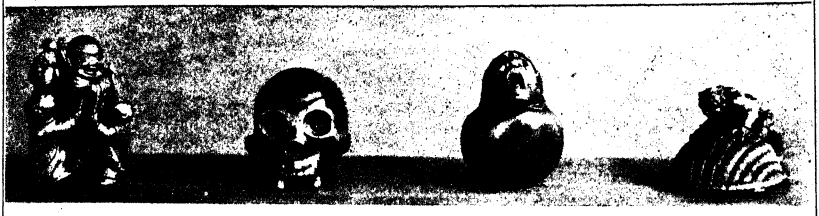
23
Ivory.
By Minkaku.
Subject, Fulling Cloth.

24
Ivory.
By Masateru.

25
Ivory.
By Tamahide.



1. 2. 3. 4.



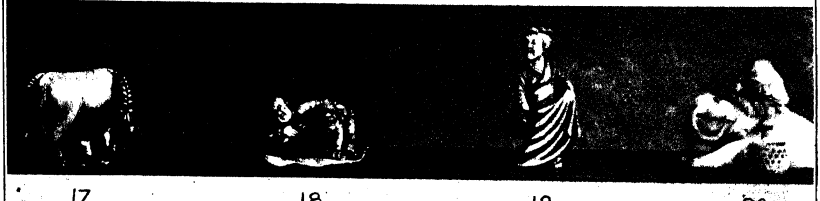
5. 6. 7. 8.



9. 10. 11. 12.



13. 14. 15. 16.



17. 18. 19. 20.



21. 22. 23. 24. 25.

the sword-ornamenter has greater range and freedom. That, indeed, is a necessary result of the well-recognised law that the more direct and complete the imitation effected by any art, the less the range and the number of the phenomena it can imitate. The *netsuke* being, for the most part, a sculpture in the round, the actions, expressions, and accessories represented by it must be limited by the principles of stability and simplicity that govern the "space-arts;" whereas, in the decoration of sword-furniture, the artist may introduce a much wider range of objects and a much greater complexity of actions. The student of these beautiful creations finds that Japanese sculptors have exercised to the full their proper latitude of motives and methods. The carver of sword-furniture did, in fact, make "pictures" in metal; that is to say, pictures within the limitations found applicable to all Japanese pictorial art, wherein such subtleties of appearance as are due to the incidence of light and shade find scarcely any place.

The Japanese *samurai* carried two swords in his girdle. They are spoken of collectively as *dai-shō* (long and small), and separately as *katana* (the long sword) and *wakizashi* (the companion sword, that is to say, the short sword). There were four other kinds of sword; namely, (1) the *tachi* (called also *jintachi*, or "war" *tachi*), a long curved blade carried by *samurai* of high rank; (2) the *tsurugi*, a straight, double-edged sword used in ancient times (the *katana*, the *wakizashi*, and the *tachi* were all one-edged); (3) the *aikuchi*, a dagger (without guard), used originally for stabbing or decapitating a prostrate foe, and subsequently worn by the *samurai* when the *dai-shō* were removed (as on entering a friend's house); and

(4) the *kaiken* (*lit.* bosom sword), a dagger (without guard) worn by women.

The furniture of the sword, — that is to say, of the *katana* and the *wakizashi*, — commencing from the top of the hilt, consists of —

The *kashira* (tip) — a metal cap placed upon the top of the hilt (*kashira* literally means "head," and in this case is an abbreviation of *tsuka-gashira*, or the "head of the hilt").

The *menuki* (rivet) — a piece of metal placed under the frapping of the hilt to improve the grasp. The origin of the *menuki* will be explained presently. A *menuki* being placed on either side of the hilt, these ornaments always occur in pairs and have decoration *en suite*.

The *fuchi* — a metal ring encircling the hilt immediately above the guard. The ornamentation of the *fuchi* and that of the *kashira* is always *en suite*.

The *tsuba* — the guard.

The *seppa* — a small plate through which the haft of the sword passes before entering the guard.

The *habaki* — two flanges (forming a single piece), which grasp the sides of the blade immediately below the *seppa*. The *seppa* and the *habaki* never carry decorative designs of any kind, but are mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

The *kozuka* — a knife inserted in the scabbard of the "companion sword" (*wakizashi*). The tip of the knife's hilt lies opposite an opening in the guard through which it is drawn when required for use. It is generally supposed that the term *kozuka* applies to the hilt only of the knife or dagger, the whole being called the *kogatana* (little sword). But by *kozuka* the Japanese understand the knife attached to the scabbard of a sword, and by *kogatana* any knife, such as that used by a wood-carver, for example.

The *kōgai* — a skewer inserted in the scabbard of the "companion sword" (*wakizashi*), on the side opposite to the *kozuka*. The *kōgai*, like the *kozuka*, is drawn through an opening in the guard. It thus results that the guard of the "companion sword" has always two oval holes, whereas

the guard of the *katana* is either without these holes, or has them filled with removable plates. The *kogai* served the *samurai* as a kind of hair-pin for fastening on his official cap (*kammuri*). In time of war it was put to a different use, being thrust into the head of a slain adversary for purposes of subsequent identification so that the victor might claim the honour due to his prowess. The *kōgai* sometimes takes the form of a pair of skewers.

The *Kurigata* — an oval knob fastened on one side of the scabbard, and having a hole through which the pendent cord (*sage-o*) is passed. The *sage-o*, which is always a strong braid of silk, is twisted round the scabbard like a sword-knot, but its chief use is to tie back the long sleeves of the surcoat during a fight. In the case of the curved sword (*tachi*), however, the *sage-o* served to fasten the scabbard to the girdle.

The *soritsuno* — a piece of metal fixed on the scabbard of the "companion sword" below the *kurigata* to prevent the scabbard from slipping (*sori*) in the girdle.

The *kojiri* — a metal cap sometimes placed on the end of the scabbard.

The furniture of the curved sword (*tachi*) has a different nomenclature from the above. Its various parts are as follows: —

Kabuto-gane (*lit.* helmet-metal) — the cap on the hilt, corresponding to the *kashira* of the ordinary sword.

Musubi-gane (*lit.* knot-metal) — a ring attached to the cap for the purpose of receiving a small knot.

Tsuka-ai (*lit.* hilt-companions) — corresponding to the *menuki* of the ordinary sword.

Ichi-no-ashi and *ni-no-ashi* (*lit.* the first foot and second foot) — two bands with rings encircling the scabbard to receive the sword-knot (*sage-o*).

Shiba-biki — the lowest ring on the scabbard.

Ishi-zuki — the "boot" of the scabbard.

In order to reach the standpoint from which the Japanese view these decorative objects, to learn how they were regarded by connoisseurs in the country of

their manufacture, and to discover what aims the best artists proposed to themselves in chiselling them, it is desirable to translate the words of the author of the *Soken Kishō*, a critical writer whose treatment of the subject is full and appreciative: —

GENERAL REMARKS.

As a general rule it is not so difficult to judge the quality of the carving on a *menuki*, a *kozuka*, and so forth as to pronounce an accurate verdict on the quality of the sword-blade.

One must commence by studying the chisel-marks on the works of the thirteen successive generations of the Goto family — the *iye-bori*, as they are called — until one has acquired a thoroughly clear perception of the characteristics of each master's style. This must be done with such diligence that in the end the distinguishing features of each artist's work can be recognised at a glance. Thus equipped, the amateur will, of course, be in a position to discriminate between the *iye-bori* work and that of all other sculptors. It is not enough, however, to be able to identify the mannerisms of the chisels. The informing spirit of the work and its art quality must also be earnestly studied. This is the shortest and only route to become a competent connoisseur. For the sculpture of a genius, whether he belongs to the *iye-bori* or not, is invariably permeated by a lofty spirit, whereas that of the artisan, whatever be its technical beauty, lacks elevation of tone and is consequently quite inferior. When once the connoisseur's mind is furnished with an intelligent standard of refined loftiness, there will not be the least hesitation in detecting any low or vulgar features presented by a work.

The *kozuka* and *kōgai*[1] of the first Goto masters (*iye-bori*), as well as of the experts of early eras, invariably have the

[1] It will be observed that the *kozuka* and *kōgai* are the only parts of the sword-furniture referred to. These, in fact, were the parts on which the great sculptors originally expended their skill. The guard (*tsuba*), to which the place of honour is given by foreign connoisseurs in general, did not hold the same artistic rank as the *kozuka* and *kōgai* until a later epoch.

ground covered with fish-roe[1] (*nanako*) diaper — that is to say, very small granulations like the roe of a fish. It was formerly a point of etiquette not to wear, on occasions of ceremony, swords of which the *kozuka* and *kōgai* were without the fish-roe ground. Those having the *ishime* (stone-grain) ground or the *ji-migakii* (polished ground) were not considered suitable for such occasions. But among the works of the later *iye-bori* there are many that have not the *nanako* ground. It is to be observed that the *fuchi* and the *kashira* are not included in the rule.

NOTE. — The *fuchi* and the *kashira* do not properly belong to the class of sword "ornaments," being, in fact, essential parts of the mounting. They form with the *seppa* and the *habaki* inseparable elements of the mounted sword. The term *nanako* is derived from the resemblance that the microscopic granulations bear to fish-roe. In the language of old Japan, "fish" was called *na*, and this with the suffix *ko* (egg) made the compound *na-no-ko*, or *nanako*.

None of the early representatives of the Goto family (*iye-bori*) made a business of carving anything but *kōzuka*, *menuki*, and *kōgai*. Only from the time (1570–1631) of Tokujo, the fifth representative, did they occasionally sculpture *fuchi*, *kashira*, and *tsuba*. Specimens of their work in these latter lines are very rare, and should be correspondingly prized. In recent times it is occasionally found that a gold crest (coat of arms) originally chiselled on a *kozuka* or *kōgai* of old make has been detached and fixed on the *fuchi* and *kashira*, or on the *fuchi* alone, or on the *tsuba;* and in other cases gold-plated crests or incised designs have been newly attached to, or cut on, the original ground. Such objects are very rare, nor would devices of the kind have been employed by the masters except in compliance with orders that could not be disobeyed.

[1] There can be little doubt that the Japanese took this idea of "fish-roe" granulations from Chinese porcelain. One of the most admired *tours de force* of the Chinese keramist was a glaze completely covered with tiny granulations which he compared to millet seed. Crackle of the finest and most regular character was known in the Middle Kingdom as "fish-roe" crackle, and these much esteemed grounds must have inspired the *nanako* of Japan.

It is a saying of the philosopher Amamori Hōshiu that "in art there are four grades, the inferior (*heta*), the skilled (*kosha*), the expert (*jozu*), and the master (*meijin*)," and that "the same classification applies to the conduct of the gentleman." In such wise, also, may be distinguished the merits of carvers. Adopting that principle in compiling this work, I have divided the carvers of sword-furniture into three ranks. Natural talent combined with the skill acquired by long practice constitutes the "master," who stands at the highest point of his art. Next comes the "expert," concerning whom, however, a triple subdivision must be made: namely, the expert who ranks next to and immediately after the master; then the expert who, though originally of "inferior" ability, has nevertheless by zealous and patient effort developed the skill which ought to be the aim of every student; finally, the expert who by conceiving and executing some attractive novelty, obtains the passing plaudits of a curious public, but whose works ultimately lose their charm and stand revealed as unworthy of lasting admiration. All artists that do not rise to the rank of "master" or "expert" may be classed as "common." There are certainly gradations among these last, but the sum of the matter is that they belong to the "inferior" order and are persons of vulgar endowments. In every art the idea is first conceived, and the hand thereafter moves in obedience to the mind. The loftier the mind, the nobler the execution. An artist who produces inferior work should be ashamed rather than proud. The connoisseur of art objects must apply the same principle in forming his judgments. Nobility of mind, absolute impartiality, and entire disinterestedness are the three essentials of a sound critic.

The old-time carvers set out by learning from their masters how to handle the chisel, and when they had acquired skill in the technical processes, they made their own designs and sought to develop a special style. Thus, even those that did not rise to the level of "experts" often produced works showing skill, force, and graces of composition. So degenerate, on the contrary, are modern carvers that if they find an old work of fine quality, they carefully copy it by taking an impression. But their unskilled use of the chisel

easily betrays them, for their execution is invariably prolix and awkward. None the less when, after long toil and much pain, they have succeeded in carving, polishing, and colouring, they fondly imagine themselves great artists, and with consummate silliness inscribe their names on these productions, pointing the finger of scorn at other sculptors. It is with the carver as with the painter. The good pictorial artist, after acquiring a thorough knowledge of the uses of the brush as taught by his master, copies many fine old pictures and studies them earnestly, so that, when he comes to paint independently, he has always before his mind's eye a model showing the inimitably exquisite points of the great *chefs-d'œuvre* of the past. But he never prostitutes his natural talent so far as to make slavish imitations. Thus every touch of his brush is eloquent of original talent, and the true critic cannot fail to detect the merits of his work. Very different is the practice of the "inferior" painter. His solicitude is almost entirely about the motive of his picture, scarcely at all about the brush-work. He is not versed even in the rudimentary art of using the "charred stick" (*yaki-fude*) to change the scale of a drawing, or to alter the shape of the figures. He prefers to make tracings of old pictures and to reproduce them with elaborate accuracy. There are not a few of these imitators, and the connoisseur, whether of painting or of sculpture, must needs be on his guard lest he deceive others as well as himself.

One naturally supposes that men like Jōi, Sōmin, Toshihisa, Yasuchika, and other masters, who, by giving birth to a glyptic style of their own, achieved world-wide fame, and whose doors were thronged by eager applicants for their productions, must have amassed much wealth. But it is impossible for a man to be great in art and mercenary at the same time. The common craftsman, as he bends over his task, is for ever estimating the wage it will bring. Thus the taint of covetousness is inevitably transferred to his work, constituting a feature which becomes more and more repellent as time goes by, and finally banishes the specimen to some degraded shop of a dealer in old metal. The true artist, though conscious that he toils for a living, has his recollection of the fact effaced by love for his work. At

times he will lay aside his chisel for months if he finds that his heart is not in his work. When the inspiration arrives, however, he becomes so completely absorbed in his task that he cannot bear to lay it aside, day or night, until it is finished. There is vitality in the result: it is surpassingly good. But if the question of gain be considered, it is found that although the productions of the master fetch a high price, the profit to him is not as great as that accruing from inferior work quickly executed and cheaply sold. The poet Basho says, "Pity it is that the *shira-uo* (a tiny river-fish of silvery transparency and almost colourless) should have a price." A great artist is injured when the price of his work is discussed: it should be above price. Business men would do well to lay this precept to heart: "Only to accumulate gold and silver is to be their slave." The true aim should be to develop an extensive trade and to achieve a great career, just as the artist cherishes and strives for the reputation of his art rather than of himself.

The *chefs-d'œuvre* of the thirteen Goto masters as well as those of other celebrities are, for the most part, treasured as precious heirlooms in the families that possess them. They seldom come into the hands of the dealer. On the rare occasions, however, when one of these gems does pass into a merchant's keeping, some one is always charmed by it, and has a great mind to buy it, but cannot readily persuade himself to pay the price, and so asks the dealer to let him keep it for a time, during which he privately consults the opinions of other dealers as to the proper figure. That man's chief aim is to come into cheap possession of a great work, and happily he is almost always disappointed. He does an injustice to the work. The nobility that gives greatness to an artist's efforts, the quality that brings genuine success to the trader, the appreciation that enables us to acquire fine objects of virtu, — these things are inaccessible unless the mind be set upon a high ideal. Sometimes valuable masterpieces are found among specimens supposed to be common, and a fortunate discovery is called "unearthing a treasure" (*horidashi*). The discoverer boasts of it, but if he had true elevation of mind and refinement of taste, he would be above such pettiness. It is the luck of the mere trader.

SWORD-FURNITURE

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

Fugitive references to the fact that swords have been more or less ornamented from ancient times are found in old records, and it is said that some learned antiquarians claim to have information about the matter. But it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the exact circumstances relating to the origin of the ornaments known under the general name *kodōgu* (small furniture). Doubtless they were suggested at the outset by some idea of utility. It is only possible to state here the views embodied in mediæval annals and entertained by scholars of modern times. In old families of artists and among persons that give professional instruction in polite accomplishments many opinions have been handed down traditionally. Sometimes these opinions are kept mysteriously secret, but of course they become known at last, and then too often they are found to be conflicting or to be based on some silly theories about the "Five Elements" of Chinese philosophy. Everything of that kind is excluded from this volume.

MENUKI (RIVET-NUT)

The *menuki* was originally a species of "nut" into which were inserted the ends of the rivet (*mekugi*) used for attaching the haft of the sword to the hilt. Thus the *menuki* not only held the rivet in its place, but also covered its ends (*vide* the learned Hakuseki's treatise on arms and armour). But in later days the *mekugi* and the *menuki* became quite distinct. An old-time poet writes: "Whose son is he, girding on a sword with silver *menuki*, that walks the streets of Nara city?" from which it may be inferred that the *tachi* (curved sword) of the Nara epoch (eighth century) had sometimes silver ornaments. Again, in the Annals of the Kamakura Era, mention is made of an "ox-shaped *menuki*," but nothing is said of its material or of its maker. The *menuki* chiselled in high relief, as used in the present day, is supposed to have been first made by Goto Yūjō (1439–1512), but whether there were any such before his time is not known. Tradition affirms that before Yūjō's era there lived an artist called

Ichikawa Hirosuke, who, working with three kinds of chisel only, originated the decorative sculpture of sword ornaments as it is now known. However that may be, the world certainly recognises Yūjō as the father of the art. Possibly the natural pride of the Goto family is in some degree responsible for this fact, but their pre-eminent achievements have silenced too close scrutiny into dates. It is beyond question, however, that so far as the *menuki* are concerned, the idea of giving to them various shapes according to the fancy of their owner was already in vogue during the time (1334–1573) of the Ashikaga *Shōguns'* sway in Kyōtō, and continued to be in fashion until the *menuki* became objects of artistic rivalry. Whether anything of the kind existed in China is not known.

KOZUKA (DAGGER)

It is not certain when the *kozuka* first came to be carried in the scabbard of the companion sword (*wakizashi*). In the Taira Annals (*Taihei-ki*) there is a description of the assassination of Prince Otō by Fuchibe, chieftain of Iga (1335 A.D.): "Drawing the *katana* of the companion sword, he plunged it twice into the heart of the prince." The *katana* here mentioned seems to have been the present *kozuka*. . . . On the whole, it may be concluded that the custom of carrying the *kozuka* in the scabbard of the short-sword had its origin in the Ashikaga era (fourteenth century).

KŌGAI (HAIRPIN)

The word *kogai* is another way of pronouncing *kamikaki* (hair comb.) There is ample evidence to prove this, as well as to show that the *kogai* was actually used in old times for combing the hair. When helmets were worn, the hair naturally became dishevelled, and the *kogai* consequently became an essential of the warrior's equipment.

FUCHI KASHIRA (RING AND TIP)

There is no explanation of the custom which commonly groups these objects together and speaks of the *fuchi-gashira*

as though they were necessarily associated. They are essential parts of the sword, and though now highly ornate, they cannot be properly classed as sword ornaments.

TSUBA (GUARD)

This term is derived from the name of a kind of cotton-spinning spindle which had a ring fixed on it. The *tsuba* of course existed from a very ancient epoch. It is mentioned in annals compiled in the eighth century, and is often spoken of as *neri-tsuba* (wrought-iron guard). The sword of Takauji, preserved at Atago-san, has a guard of wrought iron, and in the Taira Annals (*Taihei-ki*) gold guards are referred to.

N.B. Sometimes a specimen which does not bear a name indicating that it belongs to the class of either *iye-bōri* (carvings of the principal Goto family) or *dōmyo-bōri* (carvings of the branch Goto families), but which is nevertheless of such fine workmanship as to suggest that it came from a master's chisel, is sent to the Goto family for inspection, and returned with a written statement, "found inferior on examination and not identified by us." The dealers call such specimens "rejects" (*nagerareshi*), and it is said that the Goto experts put a chisel mark — the *gimmi-tagane* — on all these pieces, so that they can be at once recognised if submitted again for examination, but where the mark is placed the family never divulges.

N.B. The double *kōgai* (*wari-kōgai*), which is usually decorated with carvings of a plum-tree and a brushwood fence, or of bamboo, flowers, and plants, generally goes by the name of *tayukogai*, because its reputed originator (Kahei) became a skilled singer and received the musical title *tayu*.

N.B. In the chiselling of the fish-roe ground (*nanako*) slight differences are observable between the works of the artists of Yedo, Kaga, Kyōto, Awa, and so on. A good judge of carving must be familiar with these differences, but it is useless to attempt any written description of them.

THE FOURTEEN GENERATIONS OF THE GOTO FAMILY

1. Yūjō — the founder of the family, true name Masaoki Shirobei — held the title of "Sado-no-kami" (lord of Sado). A native of Mino, he served in a military capacity under the Ashikaga chieftain, Yoshinori. Born in 1439, he died in 1512, at the age of seventy-three. Yūjō obtained many of his designs from the celebrated painter Kano Masanobu. He is regarded as the founder of the school of sword-decorators, and his works possess great value. He invented the style of chiselling called *taka-bori* (carving in high relief), and his work is almost supernaturally skilled. It may be compared to the "exquisite view of Gobi's snow-clad peak towering lofty in the sky" (from a Chinese poet), or to the weeping-willow in the Imperial garden as it waves in the soft breeze, or to the lovely lotus in the fairy lake washed by pearls of dew. So elevated is the tone, so delightfully chaste the character, of the carving that one cannot look at it without emotion. The traces of the chisel are at once bold and delicate, and every part of the work stands out vivid and almost divine. Yūjō may truly be called the "Saint of the Art."

2. Sōjō, true name of Takemitsu Shirobei, was the son of Yūjō. He received the art title *Hōgen*. Born 1486; died 1564. His work resembles that of his father so closely as to be almost indistinguishable. The carvings of the two masters may be compared to the iris and the sweet flag, distinct plants which nevertheless bear a strong likeness to each other in colour, fragrance, and even time of flowering.

3. Jōshin, true name Yoshihisa Shirobei, was the son of Sōjō. Born 1511; died 1562. The marks of the chisel are sharp; the relief very high and the depression deep. It is strong work. In making a *menuki* of *shakudo* or gold, he beat it into the desired form, and then added the plating in colours. This method was called *uchidashi* (*repoussé*), and the addition of the coloured metals without fracturing the ground was known as *uttori*. This style obtained much vogue in Jōshin's time, but is less fashionable now. The

art of inlaying (*zogan*), as applied to sword ornaments, was also inaugurated by Joshin, and his productions are the most varied and peculiar of the *iye-bori* works. His work may be compared to a brave warrior who is not only a strong guardian but also a trusty councillor; for while it has boldness and strength, it has also something of delicacy and softness. He bore a different art-flower, but the same fruit as his predecessor.

4. Kwōjō, called also Mitsuiye, was born in 1530, and died in 1620. He was a son of Joshin. His work resembles that of Yujō in style. It is noble and dignified, neither too strong nor too weak. The impression it conveys is that of resting under the green shadow of a patriarchal pine and looking out on a glow of cherry bloom. Or it may be compared to a noble lady standing beside the brushwood gate of a rustic dwelling.

5. Tokujō, called also Mitsutsugu, was the son of Kwōjō. Born 1549; died 1631. Hideyoshi, the *Taikō*, conferred an estate on him in the year 1580. His work has the characteristic of strong surface modelling, and many specimens are scarcely distinguishable from those of his father Kwōjō. Looking at his designs, one is reminded of white sails scattered near and far over the wide bosom of the sea when the brooding breath of spring softens their outlines. It was in Tokujō's time that the custom originated of issuing certificates of authenticity (*orikami*) with the works of the Goto family. One of his sons, Chōjō, became the founder of a branch of the family known as the "Shimo-Goto" (lower Goto).

6. Yeijō, called also Masamitsu, the son of Tokujō, was born in 1574 and died in 1617. His work combines the finished skill of both Kwōjō and Tokujō, and has, at the same time, a certain quality of richness, tenderness, and restfulness. One may find a comparison in the view of a little boy driving an ox to pasture on a verdant plain; or the carriage of a nobleman standing beside a rustic fence over which convolvulus blossoms cluster.

7. Kenjō, called also Masatsugu, was a son of Tokujō. He represented the family during the minority of his nephew Sokujō, and was promoted to the rank of *Hokkyo*.

Born 1585; died 1663. His manner of using the chisel greatly resembled that of Kwōjō. One is reminded of a pine-tree and a bamboo covered with snow: they present a delightful contrast, but at heart retain the same changeless green. The fidelity and chastity of his work force themselves into notice. During the *Kwanyei* era (1625–1643) his services were engaged by the feudal chief of Kaga, who gave him a pension of 150 *koku* of rice annually (about 1,500 *yen*), and he made it a custom thenceforth to live in Kaga every second year.

8. Sokujō, called also Mitsushige, was the son of Yeijō. Born 1603; died 1631. His style resembles that of Kenjō, and is characterised by directness, strength, and vigour. Connoisseurs are wont to class the works of Yūjō, Kōjō, and Kenjō as the "three *chefs-d'œuvre*" (*sansaku*), but specimens by Sokujō are exchangeable with those of Kenjō. There is a notion that something of the value attaching to Sokujō's works is due to their rarity, for as he died at the early age of twenty-eight, his productions were not numerous. But that is a mistake. He was a veritable genius, and to that fact alone is due the esteem in which his carvings are held. It is believed by good judges that had he lived longer and attained the mastery of technique which many years of effort can alone give, he would even have surpassed his ancestors, and a sympathetic perception of his latent capacities has something to do with the rank accorded to him by posterity. In the same way connoisseurs often class the works of Tsūjō (eleventh representative), Sokūjō, and Kwōjō as the three *chefs-d'œuvre*, declining to include the sculptures of Yūjō, whom they place in a rank by himself as a divine and matchless master. That is a point of delicacy.

9. Teijō, called also Mitsumasa, the son of Kenjō, was born in 1603, and died in 1673. He represented the family during the minority of his nephew Renjō. He was promoted to the art rank of *Hokkyo*. His works are at once charming, noble, and dignified. It is impossible to deny their title to be called masterpieces. Though his time was not very remote from our own era (1781), his carvings have the peculiar aspect of age presented by the work of Kwōjō and the other early masters. The chisel-marks are some-

what deep, clear, and strong. His designs suggest the feeling experienced when, looking out under the bamboo blinds from the upper room of a lofty riverside dwelling, one sees the moon rise on an autumn evening. This artist succeeded to the pension of his father Kenjō, and used to live in Kanazawa (chief town of Kaga) every second year. In the house that he inhabited there may still be seen a stone garden-ewer with the figure of Hakuga (a Chinese poet) engraved on it by the chisel of Teijō. It is said that during Teijō's time the Goto family employed a number of Kyōtō chisellers to do rough work.

10. Renjō, called also Mitsutomo, son of Sokujō, was born in 1626 and died 1708. His work is gentle and magnanimous in tone. It reminds one of the quiet, subdued style in which the story of Akashi is told by the author of the Minamoto Annals (*Genji Monogatari*). He lived to a ripe old age and had many pupils, so that his works are often found. A son of his called Mitsuyoshi gave promise of future greatness, but unfortunately died young and few specimens exist from his chisel.

11. Tsūjō, called also Mitsutoshi, was the son of Senjō and grandson of Teijō. He did not belong to the elder branch of the family. Born in 1668, he died 1721. His works are classed among the "three *chefs-d'œuvre* (*san-saku*)." His style is somewhat showy. One can almost smell the fragrance of the flowers he chiselled, his birds seem to be on the point of flying or in actual flight, and his human figures smile as though words hovered on their lips. His sculptures are in truth beautiful beyond expression. Chinese annals tell of a puppet presented by a certain artist to a great monarch, and describe how the figure sang and danced automatically. That was a mere mechanical contrivance for the amusement of the moment. Very different is the air of vivid vitality imparted to his sculpture by the master-artist. There is no actual motion to strike the eye of the common observer, but there is a latent force that imparts to everything the element of motion, and creates a precious picture to be for ever esteemed and admired.

12. Jūjō, called also Mitsumasa, son of Tsūjō, was born in 1694 and died in 1742. His work differs from that of

Tsūjō. It resembles the best productions of Mitsutaka, the present (1781) representative of the family. One is reminded of a man reaching his goal by steadily treading the right road. There is also an element of balanced strength that suggests the fabulous serpent of Jōzan, which could defend itself equally with either end.

13. Yenjō, called also Mitsutaka; son of Jūjō, was born in 1720 and died in 1784. Criticised unreservedly, his works seem to vary in quality. The best are not unlike the productions of Tsūjō, for which they may easily be mistaken. The lustre of his house is not tarnished, nor the long-sustained reputation of his family impaired, in his hands.

Since the death of Yūjō, the founder of the family, two hundred and sixty years have passed. During that time the works of the masters from generation to generation have found their way into the hands of the great and the noble, who treasure them as precious possessions, their value augmenting as time rolls on. That is because the art of the illustrious ancestor has been adorned by the achievements of his descendants, every one of whom was himself a master. These happy results are mainly due, however, to the peaceful sway by which we are blessed, and to the tranquil times when men have leisure to show their respect for the dignity of a sword by the decoration they lavish on its mountings.

14. Keijo, called also Mitsumori, son of Yenjō, was born in 1739, and is still living (1781) in the Kyobashi district of Yedo. The work of this artist has the beauty of his grandfather Tsūjō's carving, together with the well-balanced arrangement of his predecessors. His style is his own. There is a tender suggestiveness about his designs that reminds one of a light shower sweeping across the verdant slope of a mountain, or a soft haze resting on the bosom of a limpid lake. His work always shows that noble elevation of tone which belongs to the true artist and can never be imitated.

N. B. Here follow facsimiles of the certificates *orikami* (*lit.* "folded paper") given by the Goto experts, but such documents convey no information to foreign readers, and, moreover, have been so often and so successfully forged that to distinguish the true from the false is now almost as diffi-

WOODEN BRACKETS.

Carved by Matsumoto Kisaburo.



cult as to judge the qualities and identify the sculptor of the art objects to which they refer.

The reader will agree that these commentaries from the pen of a Japanese connoisseur convey a truer and more trustworthy idea of the attitude of the Japanese mind towards the work of the sculptor of sword-ornaments, and, indeed, toward art in general, than could possibly be gathered from a foreign analysis. Even the most intelligent and least prejudiced foreign student has much, nay, insuperable, difficulty in tracing the exact processes of Japanese intelligence. The Japanese are quiet folks. They never expatiate upon beauties presumably as obvious to others as to themselves; never enter into perfervid disquisitions about the "features" of a natural or an artificial picture. To do so would be to slight the eloquence of the picture itself and to insult the intelligence of the observer. A Japanese collector, unless his habits of thought and speech have been radically modified by intercourse with Occidentals, will show the whole of his treasures — if, indeed, he can be induced to show them at all — without making, from first to last, the briefest comment on their "points." The sole exception is in the case of an object which claims the reverence of association, — an object once honoured by the ownership of some celebrated warrior, statesman, or litterateur, and hallowed by the "odile" (*kō-taku*) of his touch. Concerning the origin of such a treasure he will volunteer some information, its story being otherwise untraceable. But whatever is within the unaided reach of expert observation, he leaves to be observed. His silence has been greatly misinterpreted. The ordinary foreigner construes it as evidence either of undeveloped speech or of an unfurnished mind.

Strange conclusions surely, the one involving the hypothesis that the silent vocabulary of a people's shaping art may be richer than the spoken vocabulary of the idealism informing that art; the other, the still more unreasonable assumption that a nation can be blind to the beauties of its own creation. Michitaka's comments on the works of the Goto sculptors dispel all these delusions. Some of his comparisons may sound even extravagant. They are not extravagantly expressed, however. Nothing could be simpler than the language in which they are couched. Nature speaks to the Japanese in words of clearest meaning. Other eyes drink in just as deep a draught of enchantment from sunset on "the happy autumn fields" or from moonlight bathing a cherry grove in spring; but it may be truly said of the Japanese that in the course of long centuries of refined civilisation, they have gradually grouped together nature's fairest combinations into a series of ideograms each of which has come to be intimately associated with conceptions and emotions which the physical aspects of the scene alone could not suggest or inspire. There exists a wide field of thought which, though open to poetry, is closed to the arts of manual imitation. But from what does poetry derive its special sway over regions of the mind that lie beyond the direct influence of imitative art? Is it not from its power of invoking from the recesses of the heart feelings and experiences to which the painter or sculptor can appeal only by accidental association? In Japan, however, poetry has so constantly and faithfully drawn its inspiration from nature's images, and has been so loyally content to limit itself to appreciated interpretations of their suggestions, that mere mention of a particular combination of natural

beauties summons to Japanese sight a picture of concrete loveliness and to the Japanese mind a poem of abstract ideas. Thus, when Michitaka speaks of "a light shower sweeping across the verdant slope of a mountain," or of "a soft haze resting on the bosom of a limpid lake," or of "white sails on a wide sea, their outlines softened by the brooding breath of spring," he knows that he is recalling to educated minds, not only delightful images, but also certain subtleties of artistic conception and certain shades of emotion which convey his meaning with accuracy such as no mere verbal analysis could achieve.

The above remarks apply to the style and the technique only of the art. The author of the *Sōken Kishō* seldom makes reference to decorative motives, unless a sculptor's fame is connected with some special departure in that direction. The quality of the chiselling is, in fact, the first point to which the Japanese connoisseur directs his attention. On the other hand, the decorative design is the prime object of the Occidental dilettante's admiration. In "L'Art Japonais" that most appreciative critic, M. Gonse, says: —

On se blase vite sur l'adresse technique des ciseleurs Japonais, tant elle semble chez eux un don de nature; mais on éprouve une jouissance toujours nouvelle dans l'étude du décor lui-même. Quel tact, quelle souplesse! Comme les deux côtes so complètent harmonieusement! Car, bien souvent, le sujet se continue sur le face et sur le revers et presente dans chacune de ces parties le même intérêt. Quelquefois même il chevauche sur le grand et le petit sabre. On verra Shōki, sur la grande garde poursuivant le diable qui se cache sur la petite; dans l'une, Komachi nous appraît jeune et resplendissante de beauté; dans l'autre, vielle et courbée par l'âge, &c. L'étude du microcosme de cet art pourrait conduire à l'infini.

The standpoint of the French connoisseur's eulogy is as far removed as possible from the standpoint of the Japanese themselves. The fact is that M. Gonse, who must be taken as representing the most intelligent class of Occidental students of Japanese art, rivets his attention on the work of the painter rather than on that of the sculptor; considers the pictorial motive in preference to the glyptic method. Now, as a rule with very rare exceptions, the decorative motives of Japanese sword-furniture were always supplied by painters. There exist innumerable volumes of designs from the brushes of more or less renowned artists, and to these the sculptor habitually referred for inspiration. All classes of art-artisans possessed such volumes, and were prepared to submit them for a customer's choice of motive. Hence it is that the Japanese connoisseur draws a clear line of distinction between the decorative design and its technical execution, crediting the former to the pictorial artist, the latter to the sculptor. The enthusiastic eulogies and poetic comparisons of the *Sōken Kishō* refer, not to the pictures chiselled on sword-guards, dagger-hafts, or hilt-tips, but to the manner of their execution. Michitaka, in common with all Japanese connoisseurs, detected in the stroke of a chisel and the lines of a graving-tool subjective beauties which appear to be hidden from the great majority of Western dilettanti. He never fell into the mistake of confusing the inspirations supplied by the decorative artist with the technical achievements of the sculptor himself. However elaborate may be the decorative design, however interesting the motive, the Japanese connoisseur never forgets to look first to the chisel work. By its quality alone he estimates the rank of a speci-

men, just as the critic of pictures judges the authenticity of a painting by the force, directness, and delicacy of the brush strokes. This becomes more easily comprehensible when it is remembered that vigour and grace of line-drawing are the prime essentials of fine art in the eyes of a Japanese, and that his almost instinctive appreciation of those qualities in a picture equips him with a special standard for judging the excellence of sculpture such as is found upon sword-furniture. The Japanese *dogu-bori* used thirty-six principal classes of chisel, each with its distinctive name, and as most of these classes included from five to ten sub-varieties, his cutting and graving tools aggregated about two hundred and fifty. This fact alone suffices to suggest the delicacy and elaborateness of his work.

There are certain technical facts a knowledge of which is necessary not only to the connoisseur of sword-ornaments, but also to the student of Japanese metal work in all its admirable developments. In the first place, the nature of the metals employed has much interest, as well for the sake of the insight it affords into the metallurgical ingenuity of the Japanese as for its bearing upon this branch of the country's art.

Japan did not at any time possess an abundance of gold. The principal source of supply was river sands, and in washing out the precious metal processes were employed which, though apparently rough, have been proved by Western experts to be profitably applicable to gravel yielding only six cents worth of gold per cubic yard.[1] If the descriptions of Japan penned by Koempfer and other early writers were accepted

[1] See Appendix, note 29.

literally, it would be necessary to conclude that gold was exceptionally abundant and profusely used for ornamental purposes. But the truth is that although the Japanese loved the rich glow of the noble metal and utilised it largely in the adornment of temples, in domestic architecture, and for various ornaments and utensils, they thoroughly understood the art of making a little go a long way, and many objects which a casual observer might readily mistake for solid gold, were nothing more than gilded copper.[1] Still, as the gold-leaf employed for gilding[2] purposes was thicker than that serving the same end in the Occident, the quantity of the precious metal required for coating Buddhist images (whether of bronze or wood), temple utensils, and architectural ornaments must have been considerable. Table utensils of gold or silver did not exist, with the exception of cups for drinking wine and vessels for mulling it, together with small kettles, censers, and other minor objects to be spoken of by-and-by. For the manufacture of sword-ornaments, however, — especially *menuki*, — and pouch-mountings, pure gold was constantly used. Guards of solid gold are scarcely ever found, except in the case of the *aikuchi* (a short dagger-like weapon carried by the *samurai* and used to cut off the head of a fallen enemy). It is true that several collectors in Europe and America possess, among their art treasures, large *tsuba* (guards) of pure gold, ornamented with the utmost elaboration of detail. But these, with few exceptions, were made expressly for sale to foreigners, and never formed part of a Japanese sword. The term "pure gold" is not used here in an absolutely literal sense. In former times the Japanese were not

[1] See Appendix, note 30.

[2] See Appendix, note 31.

familiar with the delicate assaying methods in vogue in the West, and could not determine the quality of either gold or silver with the extreme accuracy attained at an American or European mint. They used a touchstone only, a small plate of black siliceous shale, but used it with such skill that their results — according to an eminent authority, Mr. W. Gowland — did not show a maximum difference of more than one per cent from assays made by Occidental methods.[1] Their success with silver was not equally marked, but they were able to obtain it so pure that five hundred and fifty-five specimens of old silver assayed in recent years at the Imperial Ōsaka Mint were found to contain an average of 99.3 per cent of pure metal. It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to note that for manufacturing purposes pure gold or silver was never used, the former being alloyed with silver and copper and the latter with copper, not with the idea of debasement, but in order to obtain greater hardness and freedom from vesicular cavities when casting. If, however, the Japanese metallurgist possessed and practised highly skilled methods of freeing the precious metals from impurities, he was also remarkably clever in "surfacing" either gold or silver so as to obtain an appearance of absolute purity. The question here is not of patina, — a legitimate and beautiful feature which Japanese craftsmen had exceptionally ingenious devices for imparting to all the metals used in objects of art, — but to a process originally elaborated in connection with debased coins, and sometimes resorted to by art-artisans of low class, though no *kinzoku-shi* (goldsmith) of repute ever descended to such deception, — a process of dissolving out the impurities from the

[1] See Appendix, note 32.

upper layers of a gold or silver alloy until the surface assumed the appearance of pure metal.[1]

Gold and silver, though here spoken of in some detail, played a subsidiary rather than a principal part in the manufacture of sword-ornaments, being used chiefly to pick out the details of the decorative design. The ground metals were iron, copper, and, above all, *shakudo* and *shibuichi*, two alloys invented by the Japanese and never used by any other people. Owing to the great beauty of the patinas that can be given to them, these alloys are uniquely excellent for art purposes.

Shakudo (literally, "red copper") is an alloy of gold with excess of copper, the approximate proportions being three per cent of gold to ninety-seven of copper. The alloy, when it emerges from the furnace, presents no special features, being simply dark-coloured copper. Its value for artistic purposes depends on the fact that a glossy black patina with violet sheen may be produced on its surface by suitable treatment. Mr. W. Gowland, who has devoted special research to this subject, says:—

The alloy has been long known to the Japanese, but there are no records of its first use, and the date of its origin cannot be even approximately determined. Perhaps the least doubtful of the earliest specimens known to us are the mounts of the sword of Ashikaga Takauji, who held the position of *Shōgun* from 1335 to 1337, which is preserved in the temple of Itsukushima. There may be earlier examples, but it was certainly not known in the ninth century. The oldest specimen of Buddhist art-metal work in the decoration of which *shakudo* appears, so far as I have been able to trace, is a reliquary containing fragments of the bones of St. Nichiren in the famous temple of Minobu (date 1580). In many temples there are statues of divinities and saints which are said to be

[1] See Appendix, note 33.

composed of this alloy, but those I have had the opportunity of examining were all of ordinary copper-tin-lead bronze. In the seventeenth century it was extensively employed, but the finest examples of it as a decorative alloy are found in the guards and other furniture of the swords of the last century and the first half of the present. The addition of gold to bronze in order to obtain a black patina has been long known to the Chinese. It is hence possible that the Japanese may have learned from them this peculiar property of gold; but the pure alloy of copper and gold, of the true *shakudo*, is essentially Japanese, and is unapproached in the beauty and richness of its patina by any alloy of the Chinese, either of old or recent times. Its rich deep tones of black, and the splendid polish which it is capable of receiving, render it alike a perfect ground for inlaid designs of gold, silver, and copper, and for being similarly inlaid in them. This alloy, too, possesses physical properties which are of extreme importance to the worker in metals, and enable him to manipulate and fashion it as he desires. It can be cast into any form; can be hammered into sheets and drawn into wire. No large castings, however, have been made of it. The method by which the black patina is produced is as follows: The object is first boiled in a lye prepared by lixiviating wood ashes; after which it is carefully polished, if necessary, with charcoal powder. It is then immersed in plum-vinegar containing common salt in solution, and, after being washed with a weak lye, is placed in a tub of water to remove all traces of alkali. After this treatment it is digested in a boiling solution of copper sulphate, verdigris, and water, to which sometimes potassium nitrate is added, and the desired patina is produced.

It is roughly stated above that *shakudo* is composed of 97 per cent of copper to 3 of gold. But, in truth, no less than fifteen grades of the alloy are used by Japanese craftsmen. The lowest of them — called *chiusho* — contains only traces of gold, and the highest has as much as 7 per cent of the precious metal. Analyses of seven specimens of *shakudo* made by Mr.

Gowland, Mr. Kalischer, and Mr. Atkinson gave the following results: —

ANALYSES OF "SHAKUDO."

	Gold.	Silver.	Copper.	Lead.	Iron.	Arsenic.	Total.
1 . . .	4.16	0.08	95.77	—	—	—	100.01
2 . . .	3.75	1.55	94.50	0.11	Trace	Trace	99.89
3 . . .	2.67	2.06	94.90	0.11	—	—	99.74
4 . . .	2.45	1.24	96.00	0.06	—	—	99.75
5 . . .	1.52	2.01	96.10	0.08	—	—	99.71
6 . . .	1.00	1.37	97.40	0.07	—	—	99.84
7 . . .	0.49	0.29	99.04	—	—	—	99.82

Another alloy peculiar to Japan and of at least equal importance with *shakudo* for artistic purposes, is *shibuichi*, a term literally signifying "one part in four;" that is to say, one part of silver by weight to three of copper. That, doubtless, was the original composition of the alloy. Indeed Japanese records state definitely that the ordinary variety of *shibuichi* contained 10 *momme* (5.8 grs. Troy) of copper to 2½ *momme* of silver. But, as a matter of fact, the *shibuichi* employed for sword-furniture and other artistic work was usually the kind known as *sambo-gin*, which consisted of one part of silver to two of copper. In the *Sōken Kishō* three varieties of *shibuichi* are enumerated, — the first containing one part (by weight) of silver to three of copper; the second, one part of silver to two of copper; and the third, six or seven parts of silver to ten of copper. Concerning the third variety the author says: — "This is the best quality of *shibuichi*. It was always used by Sōmin, Soyō, and other great masters as a ground metal. Soyō, however, employed a kind of *shibuichi* having a dark hue, obtained apparently by an admixture of *shakudo*, though the compounding of these two alloys presents serious technical difficulties, and it is not known how he overcame them.

Speaking generally, a greyish patina and silvery lustre are regarded as the most attractive features of *shibuichi*, but Soyō's compound presents even choicer qualities. In the course of years the finest kind of *shibuichi* develops a peculiar lustrous dappling, like the marking of a tiger's skin or the ground of aventurine (*nashi-ji*) lacquer." It is unnecessary to reproduce here any analytical table of *shibuichi*. If to what has been already said the fact be added that it contains a small quantity of gold — from 0.08 to 0.12 per cent — its composition is sufficiently described. Mr. Gowland says of *shibuichi* : —

The value of this alloy in decorative metal work is, like that of *shakudo*, entirely dependent on its patina. It possesses no special beauty when cast, its colour being that of pale gun-metal, or a common pale bronze; but when its surface is subjected to appropriate treatment, it assumes a patina of charming shades of grey, which gives it an unique position among art alloys. No other affords the artist such a delicate, unobtrusive, and effective ground for inlaid designs of gold, silver, or other metals. It was not known to the Japanese in mediæval times. In fact, it does not appear to have been used until much later than *shakudo*. The descriptions given of the ornamental appendages of historical swords even as late as the seventeenth century do not mention it, and the first record we have of the alloy only dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century (1706 A.D.), when it was used in the Government Mint for the preparation of debased silver bars, termed *chogin* (trade silver), which were used for commercial purposes. There are several examples of its use in sword-guards about the same date, but it seems then to have been chiefly employed as a substitute for a richer alloy, a pure silver surface having been given to it by the process already described, and not the fine grey patina of later times. The patina is produced by precisely the same operations which are practised for *shakudo*, the solution in which the objects are boiled having the same composition as

that used for the arsenical bronze, with the addition of 1 c. c. of plum-vinegar to each litre. The finest grey tints are obtained only with alloys containing from 20 to 50 per cent of silver. By the use in his design of both these classes of alloys, — *shakudo* and *shibuichi*, — together with gold, silver, copper, and iron, the Japanese craftsman has achieved results in colour which are unrivalled in the metal work of the world. The white of silver, the black of *shakudo*, the yellows of golds of various grades, the greys of *shibuichi*, and the reds and browns of copper, — all he employs in harmonious combinations to enrich the effect of his sculptured work, and shows himself in all to be a true master in the art of metal decoration.

Copper was largely used in the manufacture of sword-mountings. In fact the earliest sword-guards found in Japan were made of copper thinly plated with gold. Not until a comparatively recent date, however, — probably the seventeenth century, — did Japanese artists discover and put into successful practice the patina-producing methods which impart such beauty to their work in copper, and enable them to combine it so admirably with other metals for decorative purposes. They obtain copper surfaces showing not merely a rich golden sheen with charming limpidity, but also red of various hues, from deep coral to light vermilion, several shades of grey, and brown of numerous tones, from dead-leaf to chocolate.[1]

Until the days of the Gotō masters iron was the metal exclusively used for manufacturing sword-mounts, but Gotō Yūjō's fine chiselling of *shakudo*, and the beautiful *nanako* ground that he devised for *kōgai* and *kozuka* of that compound, gave it a vogue which continued uninterrupted down to modern times. Naturally a sculptor who contemplated the expenditure

[1] See Appendix, note 34.

of much labour and skill on a small object like a guard or a dagger-haft, was careful to use iron of the highest quality only, and to anneal it by processes of which each great artist made a specialty. But no less attention was bestowed on the production of patina. The guards of early experts — the Miyōchin masters down to Nobuiye, and the Umetada prior to Muneyuki — show a curious patina called *moyashi*, which suggests the effect that would be produced by boiling a superficial film of the metal. But from the seventeenth century onwards, the patina changes, and the surface of the metal shows a fine satin-like texture constituting one of the most beautiful features of the object. It is, indeed, a matter of constant wonder to the uninitiated that such a surface could have been imparted to iron, and the patina-producing recipes — "rust-summoning processes" (*sabi-dashikata*), as the Japanese call them — of the great experts would have much interest were they accessible. But these things were among the *hiden*, or "secret traditions," of each family of artists. No public record of them exists. Modern experts, however, though they no longer chisel sword-mounts, treat iron for artistic purposes in a manner which is at least equal to that of the old masters, and the patina-producing process for which they claim the finest results may be described here. The first step is to obtain a mixture of finely sifted clays, red and black, which is placed in an open vessel and exposed to the action of the elements for a space of two or three years. Blue vitriol and sulphur, having then been heated together, are added to a portion of this seasoned earth, and the compound forms a paste, which is applied to the surface of the metal, this process being repeated time after time, at intervals of from four to

five days, and occupying altogether about two months. If the expert judges that a good patina has been obtained, he now washes the metal carefully and polishes it with a brush (*tawashi*) of rice-straw. This preliminary polishing is a long business, and when it has been carried far enough, the final burnishing is done with dried spikelets of the pine-tree, after which it remains only to damp the object repeatedly with an infusion of tea-leaves during four or five days. Such is the method pursued by Ito Katsumi, a modern expert of the highest skill. Another plan, more curious and said to be very efficacious, is to substitute for the mixture of red and black earth mentioned above some charcoal ashes taken from beneath the gridiron on which eels have been roasted. Into an open vessel containing this ash a small bag of sulphur is inserted, and the mixture is exposed in the open air for two or three years, by which time the ash has become thoroughly impregnated with sulphur. Repeated coats of it are then applied to the iron object at intervals, for about two months, after which polishing and burnishing are effected as before. Tradition says that the early Miyōchin masters burnished their iron with a cotton cloth dipped in the juice of the lacquer-tree, but there is no certainty as to that point. It is understood, of course, that the processes here described are peculiar to certain experts. Many quaint recipes might be obtained by setting down the alleged *hiden* of this family or that. But it is plain that the published accounts of these methods are intended to deceive rather than to instruct.

Scarcely less important in Japanese eyes than the chiselling of the decorative design itself is the preparation of the field to which it is applied. This part

of the subject has hitherto received little attention from European and American commentators, possibly because it has a technical rather than an artistic character. The translation given above from the *Sōken Kishō* shows that *nanako* (fish-roe grounds) were counted *de rigueur* for *kōgai* or *kozuka* from the time (1469) of Gotō Yūjō, and that grounds in the *ishime* (stone-pitting) or *jimigaki* (polished) style were not considered proper for swords worn on ceremonial occasions. These remarks do not apply to iron sword-mounts. In the case of iron the patina alone was esteemed. Sometimes, though very rarely, the coarsest kind of *ishime* (*arashi-ishime*) was employed even on iron guards to heighten the effect of recessed chiselling, but it is generally true that *shakudo* was the favourite metal for *nanako* grounds, and *shibuichi* or copper for *ishime*.

As a broad definition it may be said that *nanako* is obtained by punching the whole surface, except the portion carrying the decorative design, into a texture of microscopic dots. The first makers of *nanako* did not aim at regularity in the distribution of these dots: they were content to produce the effect of millet-seed sifted, hap-hazard, over the surface. But very soon — certainly by the time of Gotō Yūjō — the punching of the dots in rigidly straight lines came to be considered essential, and the difficulty involved in this *tour de force* was so great that *nanako*-making took its place among the highest technical achievements of the sculptor. When it is remembered that the punching-tool was guided solely by the hand and eye, and that three or more blows of the mallet had to be struck for every dot, some idea may be formed of the patience and accuracy needed

to produce these tiny protuberances in perfectly straight lines at exactly equal intervals and of absolutely uniform size, so that a magnifying-glass can scarcely detect any variation in their order or size. *Nanako* disposed in straight parallel lines has always ranked at the head of this kind of work, but a new style was introduced in 1560 by Matabei, the second representative of the Muneta family. It was obtained by punching the dots in intersecting lines, so arranged that the dots fell uniformly into diamond-shaped groups of five each. This is called *go-no-me* (sometimes *gu-no-me*) *nanako*, because of its resemblance to the disposition of chequers in the Japanese game of *go*. A century later (1640), another representative of the Muneta family — Norinao, known in the art world as Doki — invented a new style of *nanako* to which the name of *daimyo-nanako* was given, doubtless because its special excellence seemed to reserve it for the use of the great nobles (*daimyo*) only. In this variety the lines of dots alternated with lines of polished ground.

Ishime may be described briefly as diapering. A diapered ground is known in Japan, however, by the special term *wari-ishime* (*i.e. ishime* distributed in patterns). There is scarcely any limit to the ingenuity and skill of the Japanese expert in diapering a metal surface. Thus one may see a silver teapot having its surface recessed in forty or fifty leaf-shaped panels, each panel filled with a different diaper of minute and delicate workmanship. But the *ishime* used on the fields of sword-mounts does not belong to the diaper class, according to Japanese nomenclature. There are, first, the *zara-maki* (broad-cast), — sometimes called *tatsuta-maki*, — in which the surface is

MODERN IVORY STATUETTES.

(See page 155.)

1. Old man drawing the first water of the New Year. By Hamada Seiko.
2. Farmer. By Udagawa Kazuo.





finely but irregularly pitted, after the manner of the face of a stone; second, the *kashiji* (pear-ground) *ishime*, which gives a surface like the rind of a pear; third, the *hari-ishime*, where the indentations are so minute that they seem to have been made with the point of a needle (*hari*); fourth, the *gama-ishime*, which is intended to imitate the skin of a toad (*gama*); fifth, the *tsuya-ishime* (lustrous), produced with a chisel sharpened so that its traces have a brilliant appearance; sixth, *orekuchi* (broken-tool) *ishime*, a peculiar kind obtained by fracturing a chisel and hammering the surface of the metal with the jagged tool (this last variety is spoken of as *arashi-ishime*, a generic term applied to all rough work); and seventh, *gozame-ishime*, so called because it resembles the plaited surface of a fine straw-mat. These details may seem insignificant, but without some knowledge of them it is impossible to appreciate the quality of Japanese metal work.

A word must also be said about the different methods of chiselling. Of these the most important is *taka-bori*, or chiselling in relief. The Japanese distinguish three varieties of relief carving, namely, *atsu-niku-bori* (high relief), or *alto relievo*; *chiu-niku-bori* (medium relief), *mezzo relievo*; *usu-niku-bori* (low relief) or *basso relievo*. These expressions explain themselves. But it may be added that, in the opinion of the Japanese expert, they occupy the same respective rank as the three kinds of ideographic script occupy in the realm of calligraphy. High-relief carving corresponds with the *kai-sho*, or most correct and classical form of writing; medium relief, with the *gyo-sho*, or semi-cursive style; and low-relief, with the *so-sho*, or grass character. Passing to incised

chiselling, the commonest form is *ke-bori*, or "hair cutting," which may be called engraving, the lines being of uniform thickness and depth. Very beautiful results are obtained by the *ke-bori* method. But incomparably the finest work in the incised class is that known as *kata-kiri-bori*. In this kind of chiselling the Japanese expert claims to be unique as well as unrivalled. It is easy to see that the idea of the great Yokoya experts, the originators of this style, was to break away from the somewhat formal monotony of ordinary engraving, where each line performs exactly the same function, and to convert the chisel into an artist's brush instead of using it as a common cutting-tool. They succeeded admirably. In the *kata-kiri-bori* every line has its proper value in the pictorial design, and strength and directness become prime elements in the strokes of the burin, just as they do in the brush-work of the picture-painter. It may be said, indeed, that the same fundamental rule applied whether the field of the decoration was silk, paper, or metal: the artist's tool, be it brush or burin, had to perform its task by one effort. There must be no appearance of subsequent deepening, or extending, or re-cutting, or finishing. *Kata-kiri-bori* by a great expert is a delight. One is lost in astonishment at the nervous yet perfectly regulated force and the unerring fidelity of every trace of the chisel.

Low-relief chiselling does not easily lend itself to the production of striking effects, but the skill exhibited by many Japanese experts in this kind of work was even more remarkable than that of its great Italian master Donatello, and when combined with *kata-kiri* chiselling it gave exquisite pictures. Another variety much affected by artists of the seven-

teenth century and subsequent eras was called *shishi-ai-bori*, or *niku-ai-bori*. In this the surface of the design was not raised above the general plane of the field, but an effect of projection was obtained by recessing the whole space immediately surrounding the design or by enclosing the latter in a scarped frame. Again, in many sword-guards the design was modelled on both faces so as to be a complete sculpture. This fashion was always accompanied by chiselling *à jour* (*sukashi-bori*), so that the sculptured portions stood out in their entirety. All fully modelled work, whether for guards, *menuki*, or other purposes, was called *maru-bori* (round carving).

Inlaying with gold or silver was among the early forms of decoration. There were two principal kinds of inlaying: the first called *hon-zōgan*[1] (true inlaying); the second *nunome-zogan* (linen-mesh inlaying. As to the former, the Japanese method did not differ from that seen in the beautiful iron censers and vases inlaid with gold which the Chinese produced with notable success from the *Shun-tieh* era (1426–1436). In the surface of the metal the workman cut grooves wider at the base than at the top, and then hammered into them gold or silver wire. Such a process presents no remarkable features, except that it has been carried by Japanese experts to an extraordinary degree of elaboration. The *nunome-zōgan* is much more interesting. Suppose, for example, that the artist desires to produce an inlaid diaper. His first business is to chisel the surface in lines forming the basic pattern of the design. Thus, for a diamond petal diaper the chisel is carried across the face of the metal horizontally, tracing a number

[1] See Appendix, note 35.

of parallel bands, divided at fixed intervals by ribs, which are obtained by merely straightening the chisel and striking it a heavy blow. The same process is then repeated in another direction, so that the new bands cross the old at an angle adapted to the nature of the design. Several independent chisellings may be necessary before the lines of the diaper emerge clearly, but throughout the whole operation no measurement of any kind is taken: the artist is guided entirely by his eye, though the slightest failure to estimate the dimensions correctly, or the slightest deviation of hand or chisel would at once destroy the work. The metal is then heated, not to redness, but sufficiently to develop a certain degree of softness, and the workman, taking a very thin sheet of gold, hammers portions of it into the salient points of the design, thus clearly marking out the spaces. In ordinary cases this is the sixth process. The seventh is to hammer gold into the outlines of the diaper; the eighth, to hammer it into the pattern filling the spaces between the lines, and the ninth and tenth to complete the details of the pattern. Of course the more intricate the design the more numerous the processes. The expert uses magnifying-glasses, but is said to depend more on the delicacy of his own sense of touch than on the power of the glasses. It is scarcely possible to imagine a higher effort of hand and eye than this *nunome-zogan* displays, for while intricacy and elaborateness are carried to the very extreme, absolutely mechanical accuracy is obtained. Sometimes into the same design gold enters in three different hues, obtained by varying the alloy.

A third kind of inlaying, peculiar to Japan, is *sumi-zōgan* (ink inlaying), so called because the inlaid

design gives the impression of having been painted with Indian ink beneath the transparent surface of the metal. The difference between this process and ordinary inlaying is that for *sumi-zogan* the design to be inlaid is fully chiselled out of an independent block of metal, with sides sloping so as to be broader at the base than at the top. The object which is to receive the decoration is then channelled in dimensions corresponding with those of the design-block, and the latter having been fixed in the channel, the surface is ground and polished until absolute intimacy seems to be obtained between the inlaid design and the metal forming its field. Very beautiful effects are thus produced, for the design seems to have grown up to the surface of the metal field rather than to have been planted in it. *Shibuichi* inlaid with *shakudo* used to be the commonest combination of metals in this class of decoration, and the objects usually depicted were bamboos, crows, wild-fowl under the moon, peony sprays, and so forth.

It remains to refer to a variety of decoration specially affected by the early experts and subsequently carried to a high degree of excellence, namely, *mokume-ji*, or wood-grained ground. The process in this case is to take a thin plate of iron — if iron is to be treated — and beat into it another plate of similar metal, so that the two, though welded together, retain their separate forms. The mass, while still hot, is coated with *hena-tsuchi* (a kind of gray clay) and rolled in straw ash, in which state it is roasted over a charcoal fire raised to glowing heat with the bellows. The clay having been removed, another plate of metal is beaten in, and the same process is repeated.

This is done several times, the number depending on the quality of graining that the expert desires to produce. The manifold plate is then heavily punched from one side so that the opposite face protrudes in broken blisters, which are then hammered down until each becomes a centre of wave propagation. In fine work the apex of the blister is ground off before the final hammering. It will be evident that the wood-graining is obtained on one face of the metal only by this process. Hence, when there is question of a sword-guard, two plates have to be separately prepared, and afterwards welded together, back to back. Iron was used exclusively for work of this kind down to the sixteenth century, but various metals began to be thenceforth combined. Perhaps the choicest variety is gold graining in a *shakudo* field. By repeated hammering and polishing the expert obtains such control of the wood-grain pattern that its sinuosities and eddies seem to have developed symmetry without losing anything of their fantastic grace. Another method of producing *mokumeji* was to take the plate,—composed of various laminæ as described above,—set it on its edge and hammer it so that it spread in a direction perpendicular to its original face. The new plate was then fixed on a different edge and once more hammered flat. By these devices graining with elongated curves was produced. Sometimes the expert, having welded together the several sheets of metal, fixed the plate on edge at an angle more or less acute, and beat it out by a series of blows which had the effect of peeling the surface and re-distributing it in a kind of wave diaper. Such work demanded much skill and care. The rings and caps of hilts were often decorated in the *mokume* style. In these

cases the plate of grained metal was bent to the required shape and veneered to a base of thicker metal. The metal-workers of Nagoya, from the middle of the eighteenth century, produced excellent *mokume* grounds. Their favourite plan was to weld four or five laminæ of different metals — iron, *shakudo*, copper, *shibuichi*, silver and sometimes gold — into a sheet. The corners of the latter were then cut off, and the plate, having been reheated, was placed vertically on each of the four sections in succession, and beaten flat by strokes delivered from the opposite section. These Nagoya experts were also successful with a special kind of *mokume* known as *tama-mokume*. The different metals, having been reduced to spherical form, are loaded like bullets into an iron cylinder, which is brought to a red heat, placed vertically on the anvil and hammered into a plate. In this kind of *mokume* the contours of the graining take a circular form.

One other variety of decoration has to be mentioned. It is called *guri-bori*, and its model is taken from the well-known *tsui-shiu* (or *tsui-koku*) lacquer, which shows a formal diaper cut deeply into several coats of superposed lacquer, the channels being narrower below than above, so that the slope of their sides enables the various strata of the lacquer coats to be clearly seen. To produce this effect in metal, alternating plates of two metals, or perhaps three, were welded together, and when they had been shaped into the form of the projected object, the design was deeply chiselled, the channels ultimately presenting horizontally streaked sides. The *guri-bori* exhibits technical skill only, but it is worth noting that although in nearly all the processes of decorative metal work modern Japanese

experts are at least as skilled as their predecessors, they fail to produce this particular kind successfully. The experts of former times seem to have possessed some secret for welding together their sheets of metal so that each sheet preserved its individuality though intimately joined to its companions above and below. Experts of the present day are compelled to resort to solder, and it is evident that to lay solder in an absolutely even coat over the surface of a metal plate is almost impossible. Somewhere there is a break of continuity, and a flaw results when the pile of plates is channelled.

Chapter VII

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE

(*Continued*)

IT is certainly a close approximation to the truth to say that before the time of Yūjō, the first of the Goto masters, — that is to say, before the year 1469, when he began to develop the style for which he afterwards became so famous, — chiselling in relief was not applied to the decoration of sword-ornaments in such a manner as to command public admiration. Some investigators carry the statement still farther: they allege that Gotō Yūjō actually invented relief carving. Possibly the assertion is true if it is understood in the sense of relief without the aid of the *repoussé* process. Decoration in relief had been applied to armour by the Miyōchin masters for certainly three centuries, and perhaps four, before Yūjō's era. But lightness being of prime importance in the case of armour, the artist naturally had recourse to the *repoussé* method for the raised parts of the decorative design, and though he used his chisel for finishing off the work, he never attempted to cut the design out of the solid metal. It was left to Gotō Yūjō to develop the potentialities of that method. An element of confusion has been introduced into this chapter of history by writers who represent the celebrated Kaneiye as having chiselled sword-guards with designs in relief before the time of Hūjō. M. Louis Gonse, for example,

says that Kaneiye worked at the close of the fourteenth century, and describes guards by him which show that chiselling in relief was then practised. Kaneiye certainly did employ the method of relief chiselling in manufacturing guards. He worked, however, not at the end of the fourteenth century, but at the beginning of the sixteenth. There is, indeed, a little uncertainty about his date. Some records call him a pupil of Nobuiye, which would place him about the year 1520; others assign him to a slightly earlier epoch. At all events Gotō Yūjō had been working for at least twenty or thirty years before Kaneiye's time, and the true historical relation in which the two men stand to each other is that Yūjō invented relief chiselling and Kaneiye was the first to apply it to sword-guards.

For Gotō Yūjō was not a guard-maker. He never chiselled a guard, but devoted his attention solely to the smaller mounts, namely, the *menuki*, the *kōgai*, and the *kozuka*. It has been stated by European writers that from the artistic stand-point the guard is the most important part of the sword's furniture. That view would not be admitted by any Japanese connoisseur. In Japan, from the time when glyptic artists began to occupy themselves with the decoration of sword-mounts, a clear distinction was always drawn between the essential and the ornamental parts. The former comprised the guard, the ring, and the crown (*fuchi* and *kashira*) of the hilt; the latter, the *menuki*, the *kōgai*, and the *kozuka*. Until the seventeenth century the three last were known as the *kitsu-dokoro* (three parts), and though the distinction ceased to be rigid in later times, it was carefully observed by the early Goto masters as well as by their

contemporaries, and every connoisseur knows that on the *mitsu-dokoro* are to be found the most delicate workmanship and the most elaborate decorative effects in the whole range of Japanese metal work. The guard has special attractions which cannot be imparted to such comparatively petty objects as the *kōgai* or the *kozuka*, but it is not to the guard alone or chiefly that the student must look for the history of this branch of Japanese art.

Gotō Yūjō's skill was expended almost solely on the *menuki* and the *kōgai*. So far as concerns the *menuki*, he cannot be credited with much originality. During certainly two, and probably seven, centuries before his time, the *menuki* had received attention at the hands of glyptic experts, and had been variously decorated according to the fancy of the swordsman or the genius of the artist. Yūjō merely brought to the chiselling of these little objects a new quality of skill, and to the designing of their forms, in his later years, a new wealth of fancy derived from the co-operation of the renowned pictorial artist Kano Masanobu. Besides, although the beauty of the *menuki* was incalculably increased by Yūjō, he made no radical change in the method of chiselling it. In his hands it remained what it had been in the hands of his predecessors, either *repoussé* work with fine surface chiselling, or, in rare cases, a solid carving. It has been argued that since the *kozuka* and the *kogai* had a place in the scabbard of the *waki-zashi* for at least two centuries before Goto's time, and since such unrivalled armourers as the *Miyōchin no Judai* (the Ten Miyōchin generations) as well as two of the Six *Giyoshi*, were his predecessors, the ornamentation of these portions of the sword-furniture

must have occupied the hands of experts prior to the fifteenth century. Critics holding that view would place Yūjō at the apex of an art movement rather than regard him as its originator, and would derive his great reputation from his excellence rather than from his originality. It must be admitted that such a theory is not inconsistent with facts which confront the student in other developments of Japanese art. However, the sum of accessible knowledge seems to be that never until Yūjō began to work did the art of chiselling in relief become a really admirable accomplishment. Concerning the question whether Yūjō was a great expert, the answer given by many foreign connoisseurs is negative. While granting that he stood at the head of a school, they allege that it was the classical school; in other words, a school which did not conceive the possibility, or perhaps admit the propriety, of aiming at such qualities as softness, delicacy, and pictorial ideality in the decoration of metallic surfaces, especially when the object to be decorated formed part of a weapon of war. Some even go so far as to assert that the severe formality and narrow range of the early Goto experts are as far removed from the graceful tenderness and wide repertoire of the eighteenth-century artists — the Hamano and the Ishiguro, for example — as are the three chisels of Ichikawa Hirosuke from the three hundred of Kashiwaya Nagatsune.[1] Now it is quite true that Yūjō conceived the dragon and the Dog of Fo (*shishi*) to be the most appropriate objects for representation on arms and armour. The dragon pre-eminently occupied his attention. He devoted infinite care to the modelling of every

[1] See Appendix, note 36.

part of the monster, and elaborated for himself exact rules as to the shape and dimensions of the claws, the horns, the scales, the teeth, the ears, and the armature. There are points here which probably lie beyond the appreciation of a foreign connoisseur, who regards the dragon as on the whole an ugly reptile, and can scarcely accept it as an agreeable element of any decorative scheme. But to a Japanese artist or lover of art the dragon, with its fierce vitality and mysterious suggestions, is a creature of the highest interest. The painter and the sculptor alike understood the immense difficulty of depicting or chiselling it so that it should have the semblance of ferocious vigour and implacable malignity, not the appearance of a limp, fantastic worm. All the Goto masters made a close study of the dragon. They showed it in various shapes and positions, and in chiselling it they acquired certain mannerisms from which skilled connoisseurs in later ages constructed an alphabet of identification. Thus, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was published a two-volume book (*Kinko Kantei Hiketsu*, or the secrets of judging works in gold), containing minute analyses of what are known as the *hiden* (secret formulæ) of the first fifteen Goto masters. It is a compilation of interest, as showing the lovingly appreciative attention bestowed upon such objects by Japanese connoisseurs. But almost everything is based upon the dragon, and certainly an exceptional instinct is required for undertaking a careful study of that fabulous and repellent monster, from the contours of his curves and the angles of his claws to the length of his antennæ, the set of his ears, and the section of his horns. If an estimate of the Goto family's work were derived from

the contents of that brochure alone, it would be necessary to endorse the verdict which accuses them of classical severity and narrow range of motive. But there is other and more trustworthy evidence — the *Manpo Zensho* (complete treatise on all precious things), published in 1711, as well as a manuscript handed down through six generations of a family whose successive representatives were professional connoisseurs of sword-blades and sword-furniture. It will be worth while to quote from these compilations some of the information furnished about the works of the first six Goto masters, because not only is an insight thus obtained into Japanese views about these products of art, but also much is learned about the decorative motives chosen by these six experts between the years 1460 and 1631: —

1. Among authenticated specimens of the first six Goto masters, there are not any that have a copper ground with trees, reeds, shrubs, or flowers chiselled in relief.

2. Specimens decorated with various kinds of crustacea, or with landscapes in which living creatures do not appear, are considered of inferior quality. The same remark applies to *kōgai* and *menuki* chiselled with scattered-leaf designs only.

3. Each stroke of the chisel must be clean and even, showing everywhere strength and directness.

4. With regard to the objects depicted, it is essential to observe that the faces of human beings must faithfully reflect the sentiments supposed to animate them. Under painful circumstances the faces portrayed by the Goto masters are always distressed; in joyful conditions, they are merry. Such is seldom the case in the works of the carvers of the branch houses (*Waki-bori*), or of men that make a commerce of their art (*Machi-bori*, or street-carvers, and *Inari-bori*, a term of uncertain origin). The Goto oxen are always sleek and fairly proportioned, not the gaunt, bony ani-

mals of lesser experts. Their horses are full-girthed, strong, and spirited. Their crows, even the blackest, have a peculiar light-hued mark at the stem of the feathers, and their white herons a gold point under the eye. The chiselling of the dragons' faces constitutes a special distinction, and the same remark applies to the *Kara-shishi* (Dog of Fo). Water from which a dragon emerges is always rough and has many wave-crests, but water above which the *ama-ryo* flies has few crests; and water over which the moon shines is calm, with only occasional ripples. The carp also springs from quiet water, and where flower-rafts are shown floating on a lake or river, the whole scene, from the placid water to the softly contoured rocks, is restful and smiling. Association of blossom-boats with beetling cliffs, angry waves, and swirling currents, is the false conception of a bad artist. Flowers and shrubs, however, do not appear much on the works of the Goto masters, or, if they appear, belong to a comparatively low grade of chiselling. Still there is a fine specimen of Yūjō's work that forms an exception to this rule. It is a *kōgai* of *shakudo*, having a single chrysanthemum carved in relief, and a *tanzaku* (tablet) on which the following couplet is inlaid with gold: —

"Until the dew flake,
Beading this blossom's gold,
Swells to a broad lake,
Age after age untold
Joy to joy manifold
Add for thy sweet sake."

Other exceptions are the following specimens, which, if the great masters' works be divided in three classes with three grades in each class, must stand in the first grade of the second class. (1) A *kōgai* by Yūjō, on which the design is a rain-pipe with a wistaria clasping it. The chiselling is in high relief, the creeper and the pipe are plated with gold, and the other parts are in *shakudo*. (2) A *kozuka* of *shakudo* by Yūjō, having for design a tuft of *susuki* (*Eularia Japonica*) in silver and gold under a *shibuichi* moon. The scene represents the Moor of Musashi. (3) A *kōgai* of *shakudo* by

Yūjō, on which the design is a bamboo water-pipe, having beside it eight Kiri (*Paulownia*) blossoms within a circle.

An idea of the extreme delicacy of Yūjō's chiselling may be formed from a celebrated work of his, a peach-kernel upon which he carved the twenty-one Shrines of Sanno, standing among trees peopled by a multitude of monkeys.

A favourite form of *menuki* chiselled by the Goto masters was a dragon coiled round a two-edged sword (called *kurikara-ryu*). In good specimens of these *menuki* the sword passes perfectly straight through the coils of the dragon, and the blade flashes. The slightest deviation from the straight line is a blemish.

Among authenticated specimens of the first six Goto masters' works the following may be mentioned: —

1. A *kōgai*, *kozuka*, and a pair of *menuki*, *en suite*, by Yūjō. Each of the *menuki* is a group of five dragons; on the *kozuka* and *kōgai* ten dragons each are chiselled. This is a splendid work.
2. A pair of *menuki*, the design being Tawara Toda riding on a dragon to meet the giant centipede, which is seen emerging from a mountain.
3. A *kōgai*, *kozuka* and pair of *menuki* by Yūjō, decorated with thirty *shishi*, five on each of the *menuki*, and ten each on the *kozuka* and *kōgai*. A splendid work.
4. A *kōgai* having a spray of peony chiselled in relief and a cat playing with a butterfly.
5. *Menuki* by Yūjō; a group of crows.
6. A *kōgai*, having for design a hen keeping her chicks warm under snow-laden bamboos.
7. A *kōgai*, having a cock-fight chiselled in relief.
8. A *kozuka*; the design a hawk striking a pheasant, and a hunter carrying a game-bag. The *menuki*, *en suite*, are in the form of game-bags containing pheasants.
9. *Menuki* in the form of an eagle swooping on a monkey.
10. A *kōgai* having five wild geese chiselled on it.

11. A *kōgai*, having for design a sea-scape (Akogi-no-ura), with a fishing-boat in the foreground, the fisherman throwing a net.

12. A *kōgai*, having for design the scene in the Gem-pei wars, where Kumagaye flies from Atsumori.

13. A *kozuka* with the Funa-Benkei design (*i. e.* the scene where, Yoshitsune's boat being overtaken by a storm during his flight from Yoritomo's emissaries, Benkei reads a verse from a *sutrà* to still the waves and exorcise the ghost of Taira no Tomomori, which hovers over the water.)

14. *Menuki* in the form of Taiko-bo seated on a rock and fishing with a straight hook.

15. A *kozuka*, having the design of a wrestling-match between Daikoku and Hotei, with Yebisu acting as umpire and Fukurokujin looking on; all have laughing faces.

16. *Kōgai* and *menuki en suite;* the *kōgai* having for design a mermaid, with human face and the body of a fish; the *menuki* being in the form of the dragon deity and an angel.

17. A *kozuka*, by Yūjō; the design, Shōki (the demon-slayer) riding on a tiger, pursuing with drawn sword the imps of pestilence (*yakujin*). A splendid work.

18. A *kōgai*, with Daruma crossing the sea on a rush-leaf (*ashi-no-ha*).

19. A *kōgai* and *menuki en suite.* On the *kōgai* is chiselled the celebrated priest Hijiri. He has taken off his wallet and is sitting on a rock tying his sandal. The *menuki* show him in pursuit of the demon of Adachi-ga-hara.

20. A *kozuka* with Fukki (prehistoric Chinese Emperor) and Shinno (the first physician) chiselled in relief. Fukki has a girdle of leaves, and Shinno is tasting an herb.

21. A *kōgai* showing the *omkizashi* of the courtesan Tora, who being summoned to a feast by the great Wada Yoshimori, and desired to hand the wine-cup to the person she deemed most honourable, gave it to Jinro, one of the Soga brothers, then a humble *ronin* (*samurai* out of service).

22. A *kozuka*, showing the capture of Tosabo (Yoshitsune's would-be assassin) by Benkei. The latter has leaped upon Tosabo's horse from behind, and is in the act of drawing Tosabo's sword to kill him with his own weapon.

23. *Menuki* in the form of Idaten pursuing Sokushiki, who has stolen some Buddhist relics.

24. *Menuki;* one representing Watanabe no Tsuna in full armour, drawing his sword as the demon seizes his helmet; the other, a battle-steed without a saddle.

25. *Kōgai,* by Yūjō, on which is chiselled a night view of the celebrated landscape Shōjō in wet weather. Two figures are seen, both wearing straw rain-coats. The foremost, a young man, carries a torch; the other, an old man, follows. A splendid work.

26. *Menuki,* one representing the fabulous Nuye (a monster with the head of a monkey, the body of a tiger, and the tail of a serpent); the other, Yorimasa, with bow and arrow.

27. *Menuki,* by Yūjō; the Sambaso — a dancing figure in high relief; the design on the surcoat, sprays of Paulownai in relief to represent embroidery; the pattern on the skirt, pines and cranes, inlaid to represent dying. A very fine work.

28. *Kōgai,* having the *koshin* design (the three sacred monkeys). Yujo's second-class work.

29. A *kōgai;* the design, three silver trout strung on a spray of willow.

30. *Menuki,* a spider catching a bee.

31. *Kozuka,* the *genji-guruma:* a cart drawn by an ox and laden with a basket of convolvulus flowers.

32. *Kozuka,* a fisherman drawing up the image of Yakushi in his net.

33. *Menuki,* by Yūjō; the story of Anchin and Kiyohime, represented by a bronze bell with a gold dragon coiled round it. A splendid work.

Many other specimens are mentioned, — the Dragon King riding on a carp; a *tenniu* reading a *sutra;* fishing with cormorants at Nagara; Asaina and the demon trying their strength; fishing by flash-light; a child catching a crab; Fukurokuju feeding his crane; Kengiu and Shokujo; Choryo and Sekiko; *Nō* dancers; long-armed apes clutching at the moon's reflection; lobsters; insects of various kinds; a rat

trapped by a clam; cats catching rats; rats eating *mochi;* puppy dogs playing with empty shells or holding fans in their teeth; a child setting a dog at a blind man; bulls fighting; oxen ploughing; flower-rafts floating down rivers; carp leaping up waterfalls; various scenes from the twenty-four acts of filial piety, and so on. In short, these records show that the first six Goto masters had a very large repertoire of subjects, and that it is altogether a mistake to speak of their productions as severely classical, or of their range of decorative motives as limited. They differed, of course, in the quality of their work, the third representative, Joshiu, being notably the coarsest and roughest chiseller among them. It is a theory implicitly believed in Japan that an artist's moral nature is reflected in his productions. Joshiu was a big, stalwart soldier. He fell in battle, the end he had always desired, and there is certainly something of the bluff man-at-arms in his style of carving. His most elaborate effort is said to have been a pair of *menuki* in the form of a procession of golden ants carrying silver eggs. But he preferred fierce dragons and angry *shishi.* His son Kwōjō, the fourth representative, who worked from 1550 to 1620, is distinguished for precisely the quality which his father lacked, extreme accuracy of detail and delicacy of style. Up to Kwōjō's time, that is to say, during the era of the first three Goto masters, the *iroye* (literally, colour-picture) process, or "picking out" with metal different from that of the general design, was somewhat clumsy. The preparation of efficient solder not being understood, the expert had to pin each tiny plate of gold, silver, or copper in its place. He accomplished this with such dexterity that the rivets

were not visible, but really delicate work could not be done. In Kwōjō's time a solder was discovered so good that a piece of metal fixed with it could be afterwards chiselled *in loco*. The use of this *ro* (literally, wax), as the Japanese called it, made an immense difference in the quality of detail chiselling, and the *uttori iroye* (riveted plating) of the first Goto experts was finally abandoned.

It is unnecessary to enter into any further analysis of the Goto masters' work. What has been said above of the first six generations applies to the methods of all their successors. The influence exercised by the family and its branches in this particular sphere of Japanese art was enormous. Until the time of Kwōjō and Tokujō sword-mounts were valued solely for their uses: the idea of collecting and treasuring them as objects of art does not appear to have occurred to any dilettante. But when the reign of peace inaugurated by the Tokugawa regents gave people leisure to think of the sword's furniture as much as of its blade, it began to be the fashion to make collections of the beautiful specimens of sculpture in metal, then produced in large quantities in the capitals of many of the fifes; and from that era until the present, it was always considered that the basis of every good collection must be a series representing the works of the first fourteen Goto experts, from Yūjō to Keijō. Any careful student of the subject who has had an opportunity of examining the splendid works of other great masters, will be disposed to rebel against the factitious prominence thus assigned to the productions of the Goto, — the *iye-bori*, or "carvings of the family," as they are called. Yet the Japanese verdict is probably correct, for the foundation of this

branch of art is undoubtedly relief-chiselling, and whether the Goto masters originated that style or merely raised it from a condition of tentative inferiority to a state of the highest perfection, the credit belongs to them of having demonstrated its capabilities, and thus opened to Japanese sculptors a path leading to results absolutely unrivalled in the corresponding work of other nations. It is worth while to note here that at the beginning of the present century a *kōgai*, a *kozuka* or a pair of *menuki* authenticated as fine specimens of an early Goto master, commanded a price of from £8 to £40.

Recapitulating the art relations of the Goto's work, the broad facts are that they introduced the style of carving in relief without the aid of *repoussé*; that they invented, or, at all events, raised to an admirable grade, the *nanako* grounds which form such beautiful fields for metal sculpture of every kind; that they devised the method of "picking out," or plating with various metals in order to produce pictorial effects; and that they carried the process of gold inlaying to a point of delicacy far beyond the conception of previous artists. It is curious that this last development should stand chiefly to the credit of the third representative, Jōshiu, otherwise a comparatively rough expert.

Not until the time of Tokujō, the fifth of the Goto masters, who worked from 1561 to 1631, is there any evidence that guards or *fuchi-gashira* were among the productions of the family, and, on the whole, their work in that particular line may be dismissed as inappreciable. In fact, guard-making remained for a long time the special business of the armourer, and the method of decoration adopted was either to impart

to the outline of the guard some quaint shape, or to weld it in such a manner that the surface presented the appearance of wood graining, or to decorate it with designs chiselled *à jour*. As to the first method, nothing need be said: it was a device within the range of the most ordinary skill. But the wood-grain (*mokume*) surface must be classed among the remarkable achievements of the Japanese armourer. It seems impossible to determine when this curious *tour-de-force* had its origin. The oldest examples of it spoken of by Japanese connoisseurs are from the hands of Miyōchin Munesuke, who worked from 1154 to 1185 A. D. Munesuke is generally regarded as the founder of the great Miyōchin family of armourers. He was, in fact, the twentieth representative, the founder having been Munemichi, who flourished in the seventh century. But Munesuke stands so far above all his predecessors that he justly deserves to be called the father of Japanese armourers. He is the first of the *Judai*, or ten great generations of Miyōchin experts, ending with Muneyasu in 1380. It was he that forged Yoshitsune's magnificent suit of armour. Many of his iron guards are fine examples of the *mokume-ji*, or wood-grain forging which has already been described. Munesuke marked these guards *Shinto go-tetsu-ren*, or "five-times-forged iron of the sacred way," and it may here be added that, in common with the great experts of his family, the ideographs used in his inscriptions for guards are of the kind called *kabuto-ji*, or "helmet characters;" that is to say, the grass script (*sosho*) with curled strokes; an ornamental style of writing always employed in marking helmets. From the time of Munesuke down to the present era the production of wood-grain effects

has been among the remarkable achievements of Japanese workers. The Miyōchin master used iron only. As to guards having designs chiselled *à jour* (*sukashi-bori*), it is generally believed that up to the close of the fifteenth century they were more or less roughly executed. Some connoisseurs claim that Miyōchin Nobuiye, who worked during the early part of the sixteenth century, was the first to carry this method of decoration to a point of really high excellence. Nobuiye was third of the *Nochi no San-saku*, or "Three Later Masters," of the Miyōchin family, and it is scarcely credible that his two immediate predecessors, Yoshimichi (1530) and Takayoshi (1490), the other two of the renowned trio, who worked during the epoch when the Goto family's skill had given new importance to the decoration of sword-mounts, can have failed to produce fine guards in the *sukashi* style. Indeed many delicately chiselled and artistically conceived guards exist in Japan which are attributed, with apparent reason, to makers of earlier eras than Nobuiye's. But the question need not be discussed here. Nobuiye himself did not generally approve of weakening a guard by pierced carving of such an elaborate character as was subsequently adopted, nor must his methods be inferred from the numerous specimens bearing his name, since, in the first place, many of them are forgeries by makers of later epochs, and, in the second, two other experts of the same name — one of Aki, the other of Kishiu — manufactured guards some of which have been confounded with the work of the Miyōchin master. In Nobuiye's finest guards there are found two styles: first, line engraving combined with chiselling in very low relief; and secondly, decoration

à jour. Guards of the former class have the surface covered with an engraved floral scroll (*karakusa*), among which are leaves and blossoms (generally of the Paulownia or the evening gourd) in slight relief. These works plainly show the influence which the Goto family's methods had already exercised upon the fashion of the time. In the guards with pierced decoration, the commonest designs are a network pattern (*ami-gata*), or a *kikko* diaper (tortoise-shell tessellation), and occasionally verses of poetry occur, the ideographs cut right through the metal so accurately and delicately that each character seems to be written by a skilled penman with white ink on the russet patina of the iron. Among specimens of Nobuiye's guards preserved in Japan, the sacrifice of solidity to decorative design is carried farthest in one which has in the centre a *torii* (sacred bird-perch) within a frame of *mokko-gata* (four-arched outline). The *torii* alone is solid, all the remaining space within the frame being cut out. Another remarkable guard by the same maker, which the inscription shows to have been forged for the notorious Anayama, has the surface covered with deep pitting, the depressions and elevations alternating on the two faces. All the guards of the Miyōchin experts, from Munesuke to Nobuiye, are slightly rough to the touch, though they present the appearance of finely finished work. This peculiarity — called by the Japanese *moyashi*, or fermentation — is the result of the patina-producing process. It need scarcely be said that the patina was a point of the greatest importance. The most prized variety had the colour of the *azuki* bean, or dark mahogany.

The chisellers of guards with decoration *â jour*

IVORY INRO.

Reduced in size about one half.

showed a fertile fancy in choosing and inventing designs. Naturally their work was not uniformly good. The great majority of the inferior *samurai* and all the common foot-soldiers (*ashigaru*) had to be content with weapons on which little decorative labour had been expended. But with the nobles and the officers of rank the case was different. At their order the great armourers, and subsequently the chisellers of sword-mounts, worked with ever-increasing rivalry to produce fine guards which, while presenting an appearance of lightness and delicacy, nevertheless possessed all the elements of strength and durability necessary in a soldier's weapons. Many of these guards are interesting and valuable for the sake of the decorative ability and extraordinary technical skill that they display; but they belong, of course, to a class of artistic workmanship distinct from that of the surface-chiselled sword-mounts of later times. It may be well here to dismiss, once for all, a theory sometimes advanced by writers in Europe that many of the elaborate guards of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were of cast iron. That cast-iron guards had no existence cannot be affirmed; they may sometimes have been made for weapons of the most inferior description. But the Japanese themselves deny that cast iron was ever regarded as a suitable material for a sword-guard, its liability to fracture being a fatal objection. The connoisseur — and every *samurai* was something of a connoisseur in matters concerning his sword — attached more importance to the tempering of the metal than to the fashion of the ornamental chiselling, and in every record of great armourers skill in forging iron heads the list of their achievements. There is a story told of a celebrated

swordsman of Owari, Yagiu by name, who in the sixteenth century had fifty fine sword-guards made by the best experts of the time. He placed all the guards in a mortar, pounded them with a heavy pestle, and used only those that survived the ordeal. Subsequently Yagiu's guards came to be the fashion, and were preferred to much finer work which had not undergone the same test. There is, however, an explanation of the cast-iron theory advanced by European writers. Many of the guards sold to foreign collectors in recent times have been of cast iron, made expressly for the unwary curio-hunter. From these a deceptive inference has been drawn as to the nature of the genuine old work.[1]

In describing briefly the progress of the art from the time of its early prosperity until the present day, the most convenient method will be to follow the method of division into centuries.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Two eminently great names of this century are Nobuiye (Miyōchin) and Kaneiye, but enough has already been said about their work. It may be added here, however, that although the great Kaneiye certainly flourished at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, Japanese traditions refer to an earlier expert of the same name whom they distinguish as *O-shodai* Kaneiye, or the "remote first-generation Kaneiye." Nothing accurate is known about him, and the few specimens attributed to him are of such inferior quality that no interest attaches to their history.

[1] See Appendix, note 37.

Concerning the Miyōchin family, it is to be noted that they did not contribute much to the decoration of sword-furniture. There were essentially armourers, though they produced also many objects which do not belong to the category of arms or armour, — for example, censers, alcove-ornaments, metal mountings for palanquins, and so forth. The list of Miyōchin masters who worked in the sixteenth century includes many names, — Katsumasa, Katsuiye, Nobuyoshi, Nobusada, Muneaki, Kunishige, Muneharu, Munenori, Munehisa, etc., — but as makers of sword-mounts they may be dismissed with the remark that they confined themselves to chiselling iron guards with pierced decoration or with wood-grained surface. The name of one, Miyōchin Fusayoshi, has been handed down to posterity on account of his skill in cutting chrysanthemums *à jour;* and Iyefusa, a pupil of Nobuiye, became celebrated for similar work.

In nearly all cases where an artist achieved success as a worker in metals, a number of students flocked to his workshop, and these, together with his own sons and descendants, founded a line of experts perpetuating the family's name and its style from generation to generation. The Goto and Miyōchin houses are conspicuous examples, but scores of other families swell the list. Several had their origin, and attained special fame, in the sixteenth century. Reference has already been made to the Umetada family, whose representative, Shigeyoshi, became famous at the end of the fourteenth century, working for the Ashikaga *Shōgun*, Yoshimitsu. A much more highly skilled artist of the same house — also called Shigeyoshi (art name, *Miyōju*) — chiselled guards with decoration

à jour in the middle of the sixteenth century, thus bringing the Umetada family into greater repute than ever. There was a third Shigeyoshi (art name, *Meishin*), who, though he flourished in the seventeenth century (1630), may be mentioned here for the sake of distinctness. This last, working for the Court in Yedo, received the honorary title of *Hō-kyo*, and added chiselling in relief to the *à jour* decoration which alone had been practised by his predecessors. Thus it may be said that the Umetada family had three epochs, — its *début* upon the art stage at the beginning of the eleventh century when its then noble representative, Tachibana no Munechika, became the renowned swordsmith known through all time as *Sanjō nō Kōkaji;* its earliest remarkable connection with guard-chiselling in the days of the first Shigeyoshi (1400); and its attainment of high rank in that line when (1630) the third Shigeyoshi (*Meishin*) worked for the second Tokugawa *Shōgun*. This somewhat tedious analysis is made because great confusion has crept into the writings of European connoisseurs in the matter of the Umetada family. The reader will understand that the family did not cease to produce skilled experts after the third Shigeyoshi, but it is impossible to find space here for detailed reference except in the case of great celebrities.

The Muneta family, which gave to Japan another long line of experts, was founded in Kyōtō in 1520 by Matazayemon. At first the Muneta masters confined themselves to working in silver, but Matabei (1560), grandson of Matazayemon, having invented the style of *nanako* called *go-no-me* (as already mentioned), he and his successors, down to the middle of the century, are chiefly remembered for their skill

in that kind of work. Muneta Naomichi (1660) — art name, Dochoku — was the first of the family to attain great distinction for chiselling in high relief and in the *shishi-ai-bori* method (recessed carving). He and his sons, Naoshige and Naomine, worked in Ōsaka, and are among the most celebrated experts of that city.

The Aoki family also came into notice in this century. It was founded (1580) by Jubei (art name, Tetsujin, *i.e.* worker in iron), who entered the service of the feudal chief of Higo, and settled at Hasuike in that province. Jubei is often spoken of as the successor of Kaneiye, apparently because he resembled the latter in style and was not much inferior to him in skill. He also has the credit of introducing brass into the decorative designs on iron sword-guards. But the latter specialty is more correctly associated with the name of Jingo, who worked at Yatsushiro, in the same province of Higo, in 1630. Jingo's guards have brass decoration, boldly chiselled in very high relief. They were always greatly appreciated in Japan, though their workmanship scarcely seems to merit that distinction. *Jingo-tsuba* came to be the generic term for all guards having brass decorative designs on an iron ground.

The Soami family was founded at the end of the fourteenth century by Masanori, but its work did not attract public attention until the time (1410) of Takatsune, who lived in Kyōtō and chiselled guards with pierced decoration. Representatives of the family were working in various parts of the country in the sixteenth century, but their productions had not yet become remarkable.

Towards the close of the century Hideyoshi, the

Taikō, built at Fushimi, overlooking the beautiful valley of the Yodo River, a castle of unprecedented magnificence. The best artistic resources of the time were devoted to the interior decoration of this "Palace of Pleasure," as it was called, and a host of skilled artisans and artists assembled in Fushimi in connection with the enterprise. Few of the works executed for the Palace have survived, but the chiselling of the silver mounts on two state palanquins which stood in the vestibule show that even on such objects the highest skill of the time was expended. It is known incidentally that many experts great in the decoration of sword-mounts worked in Fushimi during the brief period — some ten years — of its prosperity, but the name of one only has been transmitted as directly associated with the place. This artist, Kanaya, evidently belonged to the artisan class, for his family name is unknown. He attained renown for chiselling landscapes, birds, foliage, and the long, feathery moorland grasses so much affected by Japanese painters and sculptors. His work is compared by Japanese connoisseurs to a moon-lit waterscape seen through an opening in a pine forest.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The seventeenth century was a period of marked development. For the first time during five hundred years the country enjoyed almost complete rest from civil wars, and there sprung up among the various fiefs keen rivalry in the fields of art and industry. One of the fiefs (Kaga) must be specially mentioned in this context. The feudal chief of that province at the time was Mayeda Toshiiye. When the *Taikō*

turned his arms against the celebrated warrior Shibata Katsuiye, the issue of the combat depended largely upon the attitude of Mayeda Toshiiye, then a feudatory of only the second rank. Mayeda espoused the *Taikō's* cause, and as recompense for his fidelity received in fief the whole province of Kaga, thus becoming at once one of the wealthiest and most puissant feudatories in the Empire, while, at the same time, the remote and comparatively inaccessible position of his fief rendered him virtually independent of the government in Kyōtō or Yedo. Not unnaturally, therefore, when the tide of political fortune began to set against the *Taikō's* son, and when Fushimi ceased to be a centre of prosperity, a number of the artists who had settled there turned their faces to Kaga. They were received most hospitably and liberally by Mayeda Toshiiye. Kanazawa, the chief town of Kaga, became thenceforth one of the principal centres of art production in Japan, and has retained that distinction down to the present day. The most renowned of the families established there by artists emigrating from Fushimi or Kyōtō were the Kuwamura, the Goto, the Mizuno, the Koichi, the Nagayoshi, the Kuninaga, the Yoshishige, the Katsugi, the Tsuji, the Muneyoshi, and the Tadahira. To every one of these houses the Kaga chief granted liberal pensions, varying in amount from the equivalent of 3,500 *yen* to 250 *yen* annually. All the early representatives of the Kuwamura family were pupils of the Goto masters and worked in the Goto style, namely, relief chiselling in various metals with addition of gold inlaying. Moriyoshi, a pupil of Gotō Kenzō, was the first recorded member of the house, but it attained the summit of its reputation in the time (1630) of Hiroyoshi,

who, under his art name of Kokō, stands in the foremost rank of sword-mount chisellers. The same description applies to the Mizuno family. Its founder, Yoshinori, learned his art under Gotō Yenjo, and neither he nor his successors made any departure from the methods of the Kyōtō masters. It may, indeed, be said that the glyptic movement in Kaga was entirely permeated by Goto influence, and that the greatest artists of this school in the seventeenth century were Hiroyoshi (Kokō), who has just been mentioned; Kuninaga (the first, not the second, of the name); Yoshishige[1] (1620), a younger brother of Kuninaga's, who, as well as Kuninaga, had studied under Gotō Takuzō; and Uji-iye (1630) of the Katsugi family, who had the official title of *Gon-dayu*. On the whole, however, the characteristic feature of the Kaga work may be said to have been profuse inlaying with gold. Many Japanese connoisseurs are accustomed to credit Kuninaga with having been the first to use gold inlaying in the decoration of sword-furniture. That is an historical inaccuracy. But it is certain that Kuninaga's inlaying was so fine as to become proverbial, the term *Jirosaku-hori* — Jirosaku was Kuninaga's personal name — being used to indicate specially delicate specimens of that nature, to whatever expert they owed their manufacture. Perhaps it will be correct to say that groove-inlaying (*hon-zōgan*), as distinguished from surface damascening (*nuno-me-zōgan*), began to be practised with marked success at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for it appears that while Kuninaga was winning admiration for such work in Kaga, Gotō Kiyoshi, his contemporary, was becoming equally famous in the same line

[1] See Appendix, note 38.

in Yedo. The Nagayoshi family of Kaga, who began to work when Kuninaga was at the zenith of his fame, made groove-inlaying a specialty, and devoted themselves through thirteen successive generations almost entirely to that branch of the art, so that they are generally spoken of as the *Kaga Zogan-ko* (Inlayers of Kaga). It must be noted, further, that Kuninaga, Gotō Kiyoshi, and the Nagayoshi experts of Kaga were not the only famous inlayers of the epoch. Shōami Masanobu (1620), an artist of Kyōtō, produced iron guards with gold-inlaid pictures of the Eight Views of Omi (Lake Biwa), which were the marvel of his time; and Hosono Masamori, also of Kyōtō, working at a still earlier date,—the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century,—showed such skill in hair-line inlaying (*kebori-zogan*) that by some authorities he is regarded as the originator of that kind of work. Masamori would have been remembered for his chiselling in relief, even though he had not distinguished himself specially as a *zogan* worker. A contemporary of his, Shōami Nagatsugu, who lived at Hino in Goshiu, was the first to inlay brass with gold, silver, and *shakudo*, so that inlaying of that kind came to be known as Yoshiro-fū (Yoshiro style), Yoshiro being Nagatsugu's personal name. The use of brass as a field for gold or silver damascening does not, when cursorily considered, suggest fine results. But the soft and tender effects of the combination are admirable. Altogether it may be said that the development of inlaying was a feature of art progress at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The history of this century contains so many incidents of importance that it is difficult to marshal

them in clear sequence. Certainly one of the most important was the founding of the Yokoya family in Yedo by Sōyo, who worked from 1621 to 1643. Sōyo is supposed to have invented the style of chiselling called *kata-kiri*, — that is to say, cutting the lines of a design in channels of varying depth and width, so as to suggest brush-work rather than chiselling. It is impossible to say whether Sōyo really invented this style or whether he merely brought it into public notice by his great skill. At all events, its extensive practice dates from his time, and it was unquestionably one of the most potential additions made to the art in any era. Speaking broadly, incised chiselling, which had hitherto been mere etching, became thenceforth painting. The Japanese stand quite solitary in this work. They alone among the glyptic artists of the world have carried the element of directness so thoroughly into the ornamental chiselling of metallic surfaces that every line is completed by a single stroke of the tool, and that each line has its own special value in the scale of modelling. Sōyo received a handsome pension in perpetuity from the Yedo Court. He did not confine himself to *kata-kiri* work, but carved in relief also with grand force. His fame is eclipsed, however, by that of his grandson Sōmin (1680–1733), whom many connoisseurs count the greatest chiseller of metal that Japan ever produced. He scarcely deserves such unqualified praise, but he was certainly a grand artist, and in some directions he has never been surpassed. Beginning life with the position of chiseller to the Yedo Court and an annual allowance — hereditary since the time of his grandfather Sōyo — equivalent to about 2,011 *yen* yearly, he voluntarily resigned the distinction and its associated emoluments,

and devoted himself to *machi-bori* (literally, street carving), or working to general order. This step seems to have been inspired by pure pride of art: he desired to establish an entirely independent reputation for himself, and to owe nothing to the reputation of his family. Like Gotō Yūjō, who had obtained designs from the great painter Kano Motonobu, Sōmin sought assistance from two artists famous in his time and in all time, Tanyū and Hanabusa Itcho. His reproductions of the drawings of these masters by the *kata-kiri* and *kebori* processes were so admirable and striking that the public unanimously gave him the credit of having originated the "engraved pictorial style" (*yefū kebori*), though the conception of such work undoubtedly came from his grandfather Sōyo and was adopted by his father Sōchi. It is difficult to speak too highly of Sōmin's chiselling. There is life in everything that he produced. A spray of peony carved by him contrasts with similar work by other artists as a real blossom contrasts with a paper flower. Accurate examination of his floral work shows that the style of the petal and leaf carving is essentially his own, but that his stalks and branches combine the methods of the Goto and Soyo schools. Sōmin often worked in silver, especially in chiselling *kozuka*. It may be mentioned here that from the days of the early Goto masters it became a common custom to give a backing of pure gold to *kozuka* of high quality. Sōmin's work has always been so much valued by Japanese connoisseurs that few genuine specimens seem to have passed into foreign hands. A noble example was lately sold by the principal art auctioneers in London, but so little did they appreciate it that they grouped it with several ordinary

kozuka and sold the whole *en bloc!* It is possible that many English collectors may thus be entertaining angels unawares.

The celebrated Nara family, which deserves and has received at least as much honour as the Yokoya, had its origin in the century under review. "Nara" is in this case a family name, not the name of a place. Toshiteru, an expert of Kyōtō and a pupil of the Goto school, was the first metal-chiseller of the family. He moved to Yedo in 1620, but it was not until the time of his son Toshimune (art name, *Sotei*) that the Nara workers began to be famous. Their style was then severe and simple, their favourite designs being crows perched on a withered branch, mandarin ducks in water, birds beside a stream, and such things. Toshiharu (art name, *Sōyu*, date 1680) abandoned this narrow range of subjects, and became a landscape carver of such consummate skill that the Yedo Court conferred on him the title of *Yechizen no Kami*, and he was thenceforth known in the world of art as *Yechizen*. The Nara family gave to Japan three of her greatest artists, Toshiharu (1680), Toshihisa (1720) and Yasuchika (1730). The last two do not belong to the seventeenth century, but are mentioned here for the sake of convenience. These three are commonly spoken of as the *Nara Sambuku-tsui*, or "three pictures *en suite* of the Nara family." No artists stand higher in Japanese estimation. Toshiharu's art name was *Sōyu;* Yasuchika's was *Tō-u*, and Toshihisa is often called Tahei, but these appellations are not found upon their works. Yasuchika belongs really to the Tsuchiya family, but was adopted into the Nara. He ranks as the greatest of the three. They all carved in relief, but Toshihisa and Yasu-

chika combined the Yokoya style with their own, and carved figures, plants, flowers, birds, and landscapes with extraordinary delicacy and force. Yasuchika is sometimes called the "Kōrin" of carvers, his qualities of boldness, directness, and originality being not less marked than those of the great painter Ogata Kōrin. His works as well as those of Toshihisa have been largely imitated, but, as a Japanese connoisseur of the eighteenth century justly says, the imitations differ from the originals as widely as glass differs from diamond. The difference may be illustrated by saying that prior to the *Meiji* era a good sword-guard by one of the "Three Pictures" sold for the equivalent of from two hundred to four hundred *yen*, whereas an imitation, however skilful, was appraised at about as many *sen*.[1] It should be noted that a great deal of confusion exists between Toshihisa, and his teacher Toshinga. That is partly due to the fact that the second ideograph of the former's name may be read *naga*, but also to the fact that Toshinaga, though he has received less recognition than Toshihisa, can scarcely be called an inferior artist, and that, owing to the number of his pupils, he exercised a lasting influence on the fame of the family. Toshinaga's art name was *Chikan*. No less than forty-four experts of the Nara school worked between the beginning of the seventeenth and the middle of the nineteenth century, though only six of them were actual representatives of the family.

The century was remarkable for a great development of the art of chiselling *à jour*. That kind of decoration, as already shown, represented almost the only style of the early forgers of sword-guards, and

[1] See Appendix, note 39.

was practised by them with much success. But they treated the guard as though it were a block of cardboard, and were content with the simple operation of piercing, so that the decorative design appeared in outline only. At the end of the sixteenth century, or the beginning of the seventeenth, a new departure was made by adding surface modelling to pierced work. The difference thus produced can be easily explained by saying that whereas a design of cherry petals, for example, took the form of a mere diaper according to the old method, it became, according to the new, a cluster of accurately shaped blossoms and leaves suspended within the circumference of the guard. Under this artistic impulse the guard soon ceased to have the character of a frame, or field, for the design, and was wholly absorbed into the latter. An immense variety of beautiful and cleverly conceived specimens then came into existence. The rim of the guard, ceasing to be rigidly circular, square, or oval, adapted itself to the demands of the design; and the carver, while taking care not to sacrifice the protective purpose of his work, allowed himself wide latitude and irregularity of shape. Thus the "ascending" and "descending" dragons, together with the clouds among which they fly, were disposed so that the backs of the monsters formed the rim of the guard; and a procession of rats pursuing each other in a circle filled all the space surrounding a central haft-socket; or a branch of cherry-bloom, or of plum-blossoms, or of pine-branches, or a cluster of all three combined, was skilfully bent into a circular medallion. Wreaths of iris, sheaves of rice, circlets of intertwined serpents, loops of crayfish, garlands of bean-sprays, — it would scarcely be possible to enumerate the

multitude of notions adopted by the carvers of this school. One of the principal centres of manufacture was the province of Chōshiu, the Yamaguchi Prefecture of the present day. As early as the close of the fourteenth century, an expert called Mitsune (art name, *Jokan Inshi*) began to work at Suwo in that province, and founded the Nakai family. This artist and his immediate successors made no special contributions to the art; they followed the old style of decoration applied to a flat surface. But at the beginning of the seventeenth century Nobutsune, a scion of the family, moved from Suwo to Hagi in the same fief, and the work of the Nakai experts thenceforth began to attract wide attention. Nobutsune's grandson, Tomoyuki (1660, the first of that name, *i.e.* Zensuke, as distinguished from the second, Zembei), and above all his great-grandson, Tomotsune (1680), stand in the front rank of chisellers. They carved iron guards with the most elaborately chiselled designs *à jour*, involving both faces of the guard, their motives being warriors, mythological figures, birds, animals, flowers, landscapes, fish, insects, in short, every natural object that could be utilised for such a purpose. While Tomoyuki was approaching the zenith of his fame, an expert of the Umetada family, named Meiju, moved from Kyōtō to Hagi, and his grandson Nobumasa (1690) established the Okada family, which contributed several good artists to the Chōshiu school. Another and more important family whose representatives also worked at Hagi, was the Okamoto,[1] of which there were two branches, one founded at the end of the sixteenth century by Tomoharu; the other, a hundred years later, by Tomotsugu. Yet another

[1] See Appendix, note 40.

family was the Fujii, founded contemporaneously with the later branch of the Okamoto by Kyokaze. No detailed reference need be here made to the experts that bore the names of these families. Their work was nearly all in the same style, chiselling *à jour* with surface modelling; but in comparatively modern times some of them abandoned that fashion and became highly skilled in relief carving of the Kyōtō school. The material used by the Chōshiu artists was invariably iron, which they tempered and treated with marked ability, the Satsuma workers alone being counted their peers in that respect. Inlaying and picking out with gold were freely resorted to in the decoration of elaborate specimens.

But it is to the Kinai family of Yechizen that the seventeenth century owes its finest examples of chiselling *à jour*. Remarkable as were the achievements of this family, its record is somewhat obscure. The best authorities agree, however, that the first Kinai expert worked about the year 1680,[1] and that he was succeeded by five generations of the family. They all used the mark *Kinai*, prefixing the ideograph *Yechizen* or *Yechizen no Kuni*, and their productions are thus far indistinguishable. But the second Kinai (1660) was incomparably the greatest expert of the family. It will scarcely be too much to say that he stands at the head of all Japanese *sukashi* chisellers. He carved designs *à jour* in iron with as much delicacy and elaboration as though the material were paper. Of course a sword-guard, which must have a certain degree of solidity and thickness, does not offer the best field for such work. It is in censers — especially clove-boilers — and incense boxes that the

[1] See Appendix, note 41.

1
Menuki.
By Goto Sokujō.

2
Menuki.
By Tsuno Jimpō.

3
Menuki.
By Goto Teijō.

4
Menuki in Iron.
By Hamano Shōzui.

5
Menuki in Iron.
By Yokoya Sōmin and Kikuoka Mitsuyuki.

6
Menuki in Iron.
By Kikuoka Mitsuyuki

7
Menuki in Iron.
By Omori Eishū.

8
Menuki.
By Chizuka Hisanori, pupil of Omori Eishū.

9
Menuki.
By Iwamoto Kankan.

10
Menuki.
By Ishiguro Masatsune.

11
Menuki.
By Konoharu Akira.

12
Knife Handle.
By Goto Genjō.

13
Knife Handle.
By Goto Teijō.

14
Knife Handle.
By Nara Toshinaga.

15
Knife Handle.
By Hamano Shōzai.

16
Knife Handle.
By Suminoye Busen.

17
Knife Handle.
By Murakami Jochiku.

18
Knife Handle.
By Goto Genjō.

19
Knife Handle.
By Goto Tsūjō.

20
Knife Handle.
By Yakaya Sōmin.

21
Knife Handle.
By Hosono Masamori.

22
Knife Handle.
By Kikuchi Tsunechika.

23
Knife Handle.
By Goto Ichijō.

24
Ring and Tip.
By Tsuchiya Yasuchika.

25
Ring and Tip.
By Omori Eishū.

26
Ring and Tip.
By Ishiguro Masatsune.

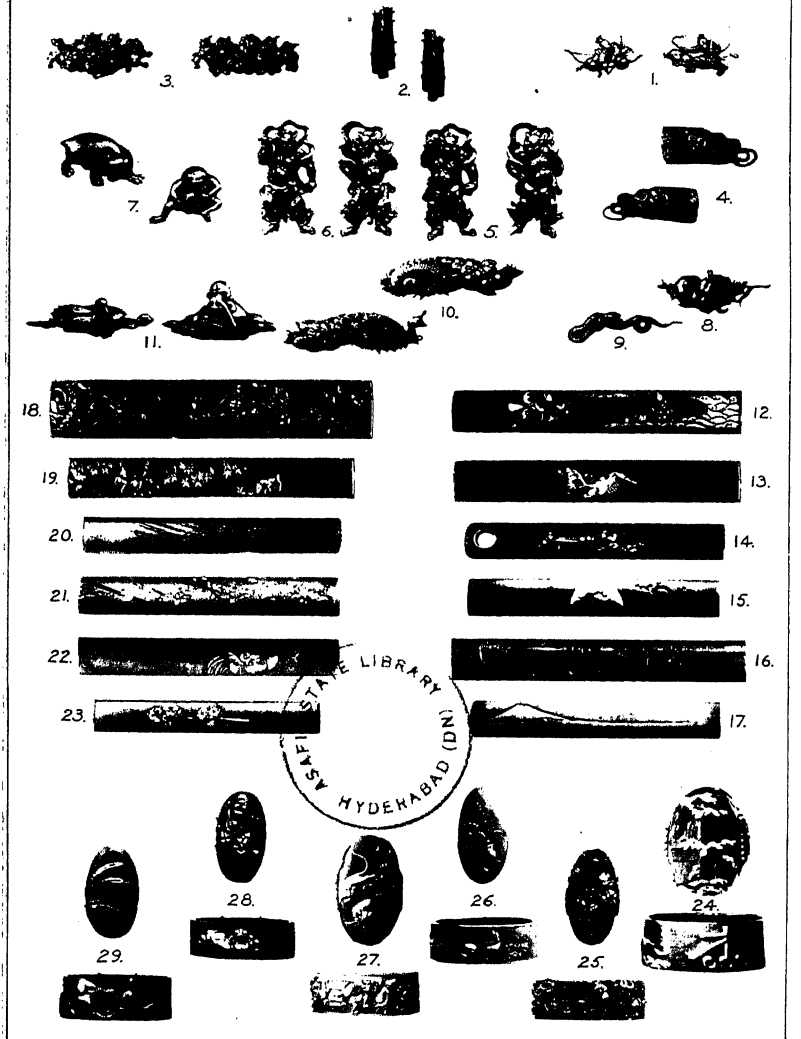
27
Ring and Tip.
By Nagatsune.

28
Ring and Tip.
By Suminoye Busen.

29
Ring and Tip.
By Otsuki Mitsuoki.

(See page 287.)

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most wonderful examples of Kinai's skill are found. These utensils he could cast of wafer-like thinness, decorating them afterwards with pierced patterns fine as lace. Many exquisite specimens were made by him to order of the feudal chief of Yechizen, who presented them to the Court in Yedo. Thus Kinai's *chefs-d'œuvre* came to be called *Kenjo Kinai* (presentation Kinai), a term generally applied in later times to all art productions of superlative excellence. The Kinai experts are specially spoken of for supplementing pierced decoration with surface modelling. After the fame of the family had been established, all the *sukashi-bori* work produced in Yechizen, whether from the Kinai *ateliers* or not, was generally classed as *Kinai-bori*, though Kanemori (1680) and Chiusaku 1700), working independently, turned out many examples so good as to deserve distinct mention.

The Akao family of Yechizen must also be referred to. Its founder, Yoshitsugu, was a contemporary of the first Kinai, and worked in the same style. But it is on account of his son, also called Yoshitsugu, that the family chiefly deserves to be remembered; for this artist (1670) was the first to employ chiselling *à jour* in the decoration of *shakudo* guards. Such work had hitherto been confined to iron, but from Yoshitsugu's time it came to be applied to all metals, *shakudo*, *shibuichi*, silver, gold, and brass. This new departure may almost be said to mark an epoch, for by skilful employment of the *sukashi* process the artist was able to produce effects of atmosphere and space which immensely enhanced the beauty of a design.[1] Yoshitsugu[2] subsequently settled in Yedo, and was succeeded by experts of the Akao family through

[1] See Appendix, note 42.

[2] See Appendix, note 43.

several generations, but none of them attained special skill.

At the time of the second Kinai, the province of Echizen possessed another artist, Kogitsune, who enjoys a great reputation in Japan. Local tradition says that, being ordered to carve a lifelike dragon for the chief of the province, he sat for ten days and nights in the open air at Mikuni, watching the whirlwinds for which that place was remarkable. At last he imagined that he saw a dragon in one of the revolving storms, and the impression was so vivid that he was able to reproduce the monster in iron exactly as he had seen it, a very unusual kind of dragon.

Before dismissing the subject of chiselling *à jour* in the seventeenth century, reference must be made to Umetada Muneyuki (1650), a Kyōtō expert, who did magnificent work of that nature, several of his masterpieces being made to order of the *Shōgun's* Court in Yedo; and also to the Ito family, founded by Masanobu in 1670. Masanobu, commonly called Tsuboya Tasuke, or "Tasuke the guard-maker," lived in Kyōtō, and won a high reputation. His son, Masatsune, however, was the artist of the family *par excellence*. He settled in Yedo, received the appointment of guard-maker to the *Shōgun's* Court, and was scarcely inferior to the second Kinai as a chiseller of decoration *à jour*. Representatives of the Ito family continued to work in Yedo down to the *Meiji* era, and one of them, to whom further reference will be made, now ranks among the masters of the era. The Ito chisellers followed the lead of Akao Yoshitsugu, and worked in *shakudo*, *shibuichi*, etc. as well as in iron.

In this context reference must be made to a school

of experts who worked at Hikone in Omi province. Their style was moulded on that of Kitagawa Sōden (circ. 1640), who forged large iron guards having curved edges, and decorated them with chiselling *à jour* as well as surface modelling. The peculiarity of these guards was that the figures generally sculptured were those of Dutchmen, Chinese, or some of the uncouth-looking foreigners depicted in ancient Japanese encyclopedias of ethnography. The chiselling was more or less crude and clumsy, and gold damascening was usually added. Sōden used the mark *Sōheishi*, which is vulgarly pronounced *Mogarashi*. Thus his guards, and those subsequently produced at Hikone in the same style, are commonly spoken of as *Mogarashi-tsuba*.

Among the families which contributed materially to make the seventeenth century remarkable for masterpieces of chiselling in all grades of relief and in the round, with occasional additions, in later times, of the *kata-kiri* method of the Yokoya masters, a high place must be assigned to the Yoshioka of Yedo, founded by Shigehiro at the close of the sixteenth century, and brought into prominence by his son Shigetsugu, who was appointed to work for the Yedo Court in the year 1600 and died in 1653. The Yoshioka was a noble family of Fujiwara descent, and its early representatives had the titles of *Bungo-no-suke* and *Buzen-no-suke*. They did not use these titles in marking their works, but they did frequently use the title *Inaba-no-suke*. Attached to the employment of the latter there was a restriction characteristic of Japanese customs. The Inaba branch of the same family had a hereditary though conditional right to the high post of court councillor (*goroju*), and when-

ever an Inaba noble held that office, the Yoshioka artists were precluded from putting *Inaba-no-suke* on their works. The restriction happened to be inoperative in the days of Shigehiro (called also Morotsugu, and, in art circles, Sōtoku) and Shigetsugu (art name, Sōju), the latter of whom is commonly spoken of, with reference to his carvings, as *Inaba-no-suke*. His forte was extreme delicacy and fineness. Among the heirlooms of his family is a peach-stone carved by him after an elaborate drawing of a Japanese festival. The preparation of the stone reduced it to about two-thirds of its natural size, and on the scanty surface that remained Shigetsugu carved eight boats each carrying an elaborate festival-car, and each manned by thirty-three monkeys. Beside the water on which the boats floated there stood a grove of pine-trees, and under their shadows mandarin ducks sailed, as emblems of love and constancy. Another well-known example of his skill may be seen at the temple Zōjō-ji, in the Shiba Park (Tōkyō). It is a carving on stone, representing the Nirvana of Buddha (*Nehan-ko*), and it was executed immediately after the death of the second Tokugawa *Shōgun* (posthumous name, *Tai-toku-in-den*), when Shigetsugu was in his seventy-third year. The Yoshioka family have continued to work in Yedo through successive generations down to the present day, and a branch was founded in Sendai in the middle of the seventeenth century by Kiyotsugu. No novel features are presented by the Yoshioka carvings: they combine the styles of all the schools.

The Isono family, which came into note in the days of Jochiku (1630), commonly called Masuya Bunyemon, ranked with the Yoshioka masters for minute and delicate chiselling, but were distinguished

by more profuse use of gold inlaying. Jōchiku is considered one of the greatest chisellers of insects that Japan ever produced. His daughter, Jotetsu, whose works are spoken of as *musume-bori* (the girl's carvings), was very successful in the same line, as were also several of his pupils and descendants.

It was in the early part of this century (1620) that Hikoshiro, founder of the Hirata family, began to apply vitrifiable enamels in the decoration of sword-furniture. Technical knowledge of the enamelling processes existed in Japan before his time, nor does any inventive credit belong to him except in the matter of opaque white enamel, which he was the first to manufacture and which remained a specialty of his family down to recent times. All the other enamels employed by him — green, yellow, blue, red, and purple — were translucid (*suki-jippo*). Parts of the design were cloisonned, so as to receive the enamels, and much brilliancy of decorative effect was thus produced. The Hirata experts cannot be ranked with Japan's best glyptic artists. The only member of the family who deserves to be called a great chiseller was Harunari (1810). For the information of collectors it may be mentioned that sword-mounts having enamel decoration and bearing the Hirata mark are not necessarily identifiable as products of the Hirata family. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term *Hirata* was used to designate a style rather than a family, and artisans often carved it on guards in the former sense.

In addition to the families of experts already spoken of as having made their *début* in this century, the following may be noted without any detailed reference: — the Tsuji of Yedo, founded by Masachika

(1660), which produced several generations of skilled experts; the Nomura, also of Yedo, founded by Masaoki (1650); the Wakabayashi of Toyama in Yetchiu, founded by Kaneko Denzaburo (1690); the Inouye of Kyōtō, founded by Saburozayemon (1650); the Yasui of Kyōtō, founded by Mitsusada (1650) and made specially famous by the incomparable chiseller Nagatsune (1770), commonly called *Ichi-no-miya Yechizen;* the Chiyo of Tsuyama (in Mimasaka), founded by Kinsuke (1680), whose experts produced magnificent silver work; the Kaneko of Kii, founded by Kichinojo (1640); the Uyemura of Kyōtō, founded by Yasunobu (1600) and made celebrated by Masuya Kuhei (1600), and Masuya Kichibei (1720); and greatest perhaps, of all these, the Iwamoto of Yedo, founded by Chiubei (1680), a pupil of Yokoya Sōmin. The century closed when Yanagawa Naomasa, one of the most renowned masters in the whole history of the art, was perpetuating in Yedo the noble style of his teacher Sōmin.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

An immense quantity of beautiful work distinguished this century, and the names of many great experts appear in its annals, but it added nothing to the methods already practised. Scores of skilled chisellers devoted themselves to perfecting the processes of their predecessors without inventing any new technical mode, and, on the whole, it may be said that the distinguishing features of the century were elaboration of detail and splendour of decorative effect. Such developments were consistent with the spirit of the time, for the country had now enjoyed a

hundred years of unprecedented peace, and the various principalities throughout the empire, ceasing to be disturbed by problems of military expansion and perils or projects of aggression, had become competitive centres of art production.

At the opening of the century Gorobei of Kyōtō is found chiselling iron guards with decoration *à jour* so skilfully that the term *kinai*, which had previously been used to designate particularly delicate and elaborate work of this description was now replaced by *Daigoro-saku*, a name obtained by compounding the first ideographs of *Daimonji-ya*, as the artists' atelier was called, and "Gorobei." Contemporaneous with Gorobei was Shōyemon, called also Tomoyoshi or Yūki, who has had few peers as a maker of *mokume* grounds. Shōyemon is generally known as Nomura Masa-ya.[1] He entered the service of the feudal chief of Awa, and founded a branch of the Nomura family in Tokushima, the capital of that fief. It should be noted that Yedo was the seat of the elder branch of the Nomura family, which was founded by Masatoki (1660), and gave to Japan a number of well-remembered experts, — Masanori (art name, *Itoku*, 1790), Masayoshi (art name, *Suihaku*, 1760); Masatsugu (1760); Masayoshi (art name, *Katōji*, 1790), and others. All these experts excelled in the production of *mokume*, but were also appreciated for their chiselling in relief. The most celebrated of all the Nomura masters was Jimpō (1750), commonly called Tsū Jimpō. He took his designs from the pictures of Tanyu, the greatest artist of the preceding century, and his chiselling shows extraordinary minuteness and delicacy. Numerous imitations of his work were

[1] See Appendix, note 44.

produced in the second half of the eighteenth century. Scarcely less renowned was another member of the same family, artistically known as *Hiyobu-jo* or *Yūsen* (1790). His literary talents were as great as his glyptic skill, and he received from the Yedo Court the honorary title of *Hōgen*.

It is observable that in this century the artists showed a disposition to make a specialty of particular fields of design. Thus Shōami Tempō (1700), of Kyōtō, confined himself almost exclusively to chiselling peonies and chrysanthemums tossed by the wind. Kikugawa Muneyoshi (1720), of Yedo, commonly called Chōbei, carved chrysanthemums so admirably that *Chōbei-kiku* (Chōbei chrysanthemums) came to be a synonym for exceptionally fine work of this class. Nara Ichibei (1730), pupil of the great Nara Yasuchika, became so celebrated for chiselling the landscapes of Omi that his contemporaries spoke of him as *Miidera*[1] *Ichibei*. Nara Masanaga (1740) obtained equal fame for his moor-scapes with a praying mantis and tufts of soft feathery *susuki* (*Eularia japonica*) in the foreground. Uyemura Munemine (1720) of Kyōtō excelled in the chiselling of warriors. Yasuyama Motozumi (1760), of Mito, one of the greatest masters of any era, who was known in art circles as *Sekijōken* or *Tōgū* chiselled mythological Chinese figures with extraordinary force and delicacy, his favourite metal being *shibuichi*. Shinshichi, of Osaka (1730), chose a fishing-rod and river trout as his specialty. Noda Yoshihiro (1730), of Yedo, chiselled groups of fishes with admirable fidelity. Tamagawa Yoshihisa (1790), of Mito, made himself famous by his dragons. Fujita Katsusada (1700), of

[1] See Appendix, note 45.

Ōsaka, is remembered for his wonderful masks and cuttle-fish. Kikuoka Mitsuyūki (1780), of Yedo, artistically known as Dopposai or Saikaon, an artist of the highest ability, is held to have equalled Sōmin as a carver of peonies; and Shōami Morikuni (1730), of Matsuyama (Iyo province), has had few equals as a chiseller of dragons and clouds. This list might be greatly prolonged, but such distinctions are apt to be misleading, since in many cases they suggest a narrower range of motives than the artists in question really selected.

The Nara family made large contributions to the finest productions of this century. Toshihisa and Yasuchika, who worked during the first half of the century, have already been spoken of, and with them must be bracketed Jōi (art name, *Issando Nagaharu*, 1720), who by many connoisseurs is regarded as the peer of the "Three Nara Pictures." It is not certain whether Jōi belonged originally to the Nara family or was adopted into it. He learned carving from Nara Hisanaga (art name, *Zenzo*), who, in turn, was a brilliant pupil of the celebrated Nara Toshinaga. Jōi excelled in the *shishi-ai* style of carving. His work was singularly soft without sacrificing strength, and he chose elaborate subjects, using gold freely for purposes of damascening and picking out. He drew his motives chiefly from martial history,[1] but he chiselled flowers, also, and landscapes with consummate skill. Three other members of the Nara family deserve a place in this context. They are Masanaga (1740), his son Masachika (1760), and Masanobu. Masanaga (art name, *Seiraku*) was a pupil of Toshihisa. Reference has already been made to his celebrated

[1] See Appendix, note 46.

landscapes with a praying mantis and tufts of *Eularia japonica* in the foreground. His son, Masachika, became a pupil of Jōi in the latter's old age, and took the art name of *Jowa*. He did not reach the high level of either his teacher or his father, but he was undoubtedly a grand expert. Nara Masanobu (1750) had the art names of *Kikuju-sai* and *Kiko*. His works are greatly prized by Japanese connoisseurs, but as his specialty was the carving of the *amariyo* (the rain-dragon), he does not appeal strongly to foreign taste.

At the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, Nagasaki's experts were brought into prominence by Kizayemon, artistically known as *Jakushi*. Nagasaki, from time immemorial, had been permeated by Chinese influences, being the centre of trade and intercourse between Japan and the neighbouring empire. Hence its chisellers of sword-mounts affected designs generally called *kwanto-gata*, or Canton style, many examples of which may be seen throughout the whole field of Japanese decorative art. The familiar "willow-pattern" is the worst specimen of this type. Its features are stiff figures of Chinese warriors, court ladies, mandarins or historical personages, set in a stereotyped garden with architectural accompaniment; or little children — the well-known *kara-ko* (Chinese children) — with tonsured heads, playing various out-door games; or dragons of more or less conventionalised shape. Jakushi carved dragons, but he also chiselled landscapes, bamboos tossed by the wind and other designs of flowers and foliage, and his skill was so conspicuous that in Nagasaki people learned to use the term *Jakushi-bori* as generally distinctive of beautiful work.

The use of *kwanto-gata* motives are not confined to Nagasaki experts. Gotō Kiyonori, who worked in Yedo contemporaneously with Jakushi, became celebrated for similar carving, and examples of it are not infrequently found among the productions of inferior experts. These *kwanto-tsuba*, and the *mogarashi tsuba* already described, are, perhaps, the least interesting of all the *ko-dogu*.

The artists thus far noticed as belonging to the eighteenth century were all representatives of families established at an earlier date. Families which not only gave lustre to the century but also had their origin in it, are the Hamano, the Omori, the Iwamoto, and the Okamoto. These houses produced experts who may be said to have carried the art to its zenith.

The Hamano family of Yedo first came into note in the days of Masayori (1730), a pupil of the great Nara Toshihisa. Masayori is always known as Shōzui, the alternative pronunciation of the ideographs forming his name. He had many art titles — *Otsuriuken*, *Miboku Rifūdo*, etc. He worked chiefly in *shakudo*, but often in iron, not making any departure from the Nara style, but using his chisels with extraordinary strength yet at no sacrifice of grace and delicacy. The *Sōken Kishō* says that the lines of his carving are like "the storm of a tiger's roar or the wind of a dragon's rush through the clouds." It may be truly said of the Hamano family that it did not give one inferior artist to Japan. Shōzui himself was probably the greatest, but his pupils Moriyuki and Noriyori, and his successors Masanobu (1780) and Norinobu (1790) rank almost as his peers.[1] The Hamano

[1] See Appendix, note 47.

artists achieved their greatest successes in figure subjects, but among specimens by Shōzui there are found some exquisitely delicate and lifelike carvings of bees, spiders, fireflies and herons.

The Omori family of Yedo is generally supposed to have been founded by Shigemitsu, who worked in the opening years of the eighteenth century, but his father, Shirohei, a *samurai* of Odawara, was really the first Omori carver. Chronologically, therefore, the family should have been referred to in the notice of the seventeenth century; but it is placed in the eighteenth because it did not begin to be famous until the days of Shigemitsu. The latter had the advantage of studying under two of the great Nara masters, Ichibei — mentioned above as "Miidera Ichibei" — and Yasuchika. He carved with great skill in the Nara fashion. It was by his pupil Terumasa, however, that the style of the Omori family was fixed — namely, a combination of the Nara and Yokoya methods, with extreme elaboration of detail and profuse use of all decorative adjuncts, such as inlaying and picking out with gold, silver, copper, etc. Terumasa received instruction from the great Sōmin (Yokoya) as well as from Shigemitsu, and would doubtless be remembered as a most distinguished artist had not his fame been completely eclipsed by that of his adopted son, Teruhide (1748–1798), known in art circles as *Ittosai* or *Riu-u-sai*. Teruhide was a grand chiseller. Some of his high-relief peony sprays in gold on *shakudo* are not inferior to Sōmin's masterpieces. He is said to have been the first to carve wave diaper in high relief, and to him was due a splendidly decorative ground of *shakudo* inlaid with gold in the *aventurine* pattern. The *Sōken Kisho*, says of

Teruhide: "His chiselling has force that would rend a rock. His wave diapers deeply carved in *shibuichi* are magnificent, and nothing could exceed the beauty of his peonies in high relief on *aventurine* grounds. He seems to have based his method of carving flowers on *Sōmin's* celebrated *ichirin-botan* (single-blossom peony). His martial figures also are grand." It may be said that peonies and Dogs of Fo (*shishi*) were Teruhide's specialties. Among ten choice examples of his work in a Tōkyō collection, only two are without peony flowers either in the principal or a subordinate place. Many artists bore the family name after Teruhide's time, but although their work was of the finest quality from a decorative point of view, they scarcely merit special mention on account of their glyptic skill.

Concerning the Iwamoto family of Yedo the same remark applies as that made about the Omori, namely, that although founded in the seventeenth century, it did not become famous until the eighteenth. The founder was Chiubei (1680), a pupil of the celebrated Yoko-ya Sōmin, and the family's greatest master was Konkwan (1760–1801), who is counted one of Japan's most skilled chisellers of fishes of all kinds (especially crustacea), but who also carved with admirable ability wild-fowl, insects, flowers and even figures. Konkwan had three art names, but he seems to have always marked his pieces *Iwamoto Konkwan.* The productions of the Iwamoto experts were not so elaborately decorative as those of the Omori, but as an artist Konkwan is certainly not inferior to Teruhide. It is recorded that during the latter years of his life the Iwamoto master was so besieged by clients

that he finally hung out this sign: "Orders cannot be quickly executed. Importunity is deprecated."

The Okamoto family of Kyōtō was a branch of the great Okamoto of Hagi (Chōshiu), already alluded to. It was founded in 1750 by Harukuni (originally called Kuniharu), who is known in art circles as *Tetsūya-ya Dembei* (Dembei the Iron chiseller). Harukuni worked in iron. Although the representatives of his family in Chōshiu were celebrated chiefly for chiselling *à jour*, he reduced that kind of decoration to a subordinate position, and relied more upon relief carving in all its grades, as well as upon the *kata-kiri* method. Indeed, by Dembei's time the experts of Kyōtō and Yedo had ceased to make *à jour* chiselling the principal feature in a decorative scheme. They preferred to utilise such work with reference to its pictorial suggestiveness. Thus a delightful effect of space and atmosphere is produced by clouds chiselled *à jour*, with a silver moon struggling through them, its disc revealed in the open spaces and concealed by the solid rack; or the sheen of water is obtained by a delicate outline of transparent carving; or the leaves and branches of a tree are projected against the sky by cutting out all intervening portions. Even when the *à jour* feature predominated, it was always associated with decoration carved in the round, so that it served chiefly to detach the sculptured object from the flat surface.

Chapter VIII

SCULPTURE ON SWORD-FURNITURE

(*Continued*)

ONE of the most illustrious artists of this century, or indeed of any century, was Kashiwaya Nagatsune (1750–1786), called in art circles *Setsuzan* or *Ganshōshi*. It is difficult to conceive a higher standard of force, accuracy, and grace than he attained. He seems to have worked almost entirely on *shakudo* and *shibuichi* bases, but he used gold, silver, and copper freely for decorative purposes. In his early days the objects that he preferred to chisel were frogs, snails, beetles, and so forth, and generally he added a tuft of the grass called *tsukushi* (a species of horse-tail). But he subsequently extended his range to dragons, figures, demons, masks, and other objects, and among his numerous works, all of which are highly valued in Japan, there is not one of inferior quality. His Deva Kings, chiselled in high relief in *shakudo* with gold decoration, may be compared to the celebrated wooden statues at the temple Kōfuku-ji. Japanese connoisseurs liken the nobility and purity of Nagatsune's style to "the moon rising over Obate mountain." In recognition of his exceptional talent he was honoured by the Kyōtō court with the title of *Daijo* of Ichi-no-miya in Yechizen. His son, Naga-

yoshi, did not fall greatly short of Nagatsune himself in ability. Both worked in Kyōtō.

The only remaining names that need be especially referred to in the history of the eighteenth century are those of Kusakari Kiyosada (1790), generally known as Kusakari Hachisaburo, who is said to have been the greatest inlayer that ever worked in Sendai; Shichibei (1700) of Kyōtō, whose fame as an inlayer procured for particularly fine work of that nature the term *Zoshichi;* and Ito Kiyoyasu (1750) of Yedo, the first to become celebrated for the variety of inlaying called *sumi-zogan.*

NINETEENTH CENTURY

By more than one Western critic of Japanese metal-work it has been asserted that a period of decadence set in before the middle of the nineteenth century, and that all productions subsequent to the year 1835 or 1840 show evidences of deterioration. It would be very difficult to discover any valid grounds for such a statement, nor is it endorsed for a moment by Japanese connoisseurs. Everywhere dilettanti may be found whose estimate of the merits of a work of art ascends with the cycles that have elapsed since its production. But that kind of picturesque romance belongs to a special domain of æsthetic education, and while its contentions are partially admissible so long as they refer to a Sōmin, a Yasuchika, a Naomasa, or a Kinai, they must be set aside ruthlessly when they do flagrant injustice to the numerously peopled school of fine artists in metal who worked for Japan during the first seven and a half — not the first three — decades of the nineteenth

century. And in speaking of the first seven and a half decades, it is not intended to suggest that the year 1875 saw the end of her artistic metal-work. On the contrary, the reader already knows that the art has merely developed new phases in modern times, and that not only are its masters as skilled now as they were in the days of the Goto, the Nara, the Yokoya, and the Yanagawa celebrities, but also that their productions must be called in many respects greater and more interesting than those of their renowned predecessors. If sword-mounts alone be considered, the year 1876 may be taken as the time of the art's demise, for in 1876 the wearing of swords was interdicted and purchasers of their furniture were at once reduced from hundreds of thousands of *samurai* and privileged persons, to a few scores of foreign curio-collectors. Thousands of grand specimens found their way at once to the melting-pot for the sake of the modicum of precious metal that could be extracted from them, and in an incredibly short time the multitude of master-pieces that must have existed in 1876 disappeared almost completely. The fate of that great assemblage of beautiful objects is indeed a mystery. Hundreds of skilled experts had been engaged continuously during five centuries on their production; millions of *samurai* had taken a pride in their possession, and the objects themselves were imperishable. Yet in less than thirty-five years they virtually ceased to be procurable in Japan. It is true that a considerable number went to Europe and America, and that an equal, or perhaps even a larger, number remained in Japanese collections. But what comparison can be set up between the petty fraction thus accounted for and the vast multitude

that must have existed at the moment when the edict of 1876 went forth? This is one of the most curious pages of the iconoclastic chapter opened simultaneously with the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse. As the old order changed, the beauties it had bequeathed to the country were swept away with the blemishes it had begotten; and if the process was sometimes slow in the latter case, it was often almost miraculously rapid in the former. Incredible though the fact may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that when, about the year 1880, United States' collectors began to interest themselves keenly in Japanese sword-mounts, and to acquire them in the resolute manner of New York and Chicago, the supply of genuine specimens could not meet this fitful and comparatively paltry demand, and the forger drove a brisk trade for a season, casting where he could not chisel, and substituting flash and profusion of ornament for force and delicacy of sculpture. To-day, an amateur applying himself in Japan to make a representative collection of fine sword-mounts could not hope for more than very partial success. Those that are already fortunate in the possession of such objects may therefore congratulate themselves, for while in every other branch of Japanese art no serious break has occurred in the continuity of successful production, the sword-mount is altogether a thing of the past and will never again occupy the attention of great sculptors.

As to the assertion made above that sword-mount experts continued to work with undiminished skill down to the year 1876, a better illustration cannot be adduced than that of Gotō Ichijo. The reader will probably have observed that, in these records of centuries, no reference is made to the Goto family.

It is not to be inferred, of course, that the omission indicates absence of merit or of celebrity. But at the outset considerable space was devoted to the Goto masters, and it has not seemed necessary to speak subsequently of the various experts born in the branches of the family; for although many of them were great carvers, they did not originate any new style, and the indications given in the appended list of Glyptic Artists are probably sufficient to show the Gotos' share in the development of the art. It may be explained here, however, that in addition to the principal family and its two great branches in Kyōtō — the Kami-Goto and the Shimo-Goto — there were in that city two minor branches; in Kaga a branch founded by Ichiyemon, a pupil of Kenjō, in 1610; and in Noto a branch founded in 1550 by Jinyemon, a pupil of Takujo. Gotō Yeijiro, afterwards known as Gotō Ichijō, was born in 1791 and died in 1876. The second son of the fifteenth representative of the principal family, he was adopted into the branch house of Hachirobei (art name, Kenjō), to whose hereditary pension of fifty *koku* of rice he succeeded in 1805, taking the names Mitsuyo and Hachirobei. When only nineteen years of age he received a commission to carve mounts for a sword belonging to the Emperor Kokaku, and he succeeded so well that the title of *Hokkyo* was accorded to him, together with a reward of twenty pieces of silver and five bundles of silk. In his thirty-fourth year he was invited to Yedo by the Tokugawa Court, received a house and a perpetual pension of ten rations, which was afterwards increased from time to time, until, in 1862, he attained the highest art rank, that of *Hōgen*. Ichijō had no less than fifty pupils, all of whom worked

with considerable success. Among them was occasionally numbered Natsuo, who probably deserves to rank next to Ichijō among the masters of the nineteenth century. Ichijō has left it on record that in his youth he made a habit of praying at the shrine of Fushimi Inari that the deity would grant him skill. One night after his devotions, he fell asleep and saw in a dream a dragon carved by his illustrious ancestor, Gotō Yūjō. Thenceforth he had before his eyes a perfect model of a dragon. His workmanship, however, was finer than anything done by Yūjō. Japanese connoisseurs say that it combines the soft style of Gotō Kwōjō with the microscopic minuteness of Gotō Kenjō, and a story is told that a party of skilled experts being challenged to name the maker of a set of sword-mounts by Ichijō without seeing the name carved on the back, were divided in opinion as to whether the work should be ascribed to Kwōjō or to Kenjō. These details furnish some indication of the career of a great Japanese carver, and of the honours extended to him. There was, indeed, no limit to the appreciation he received. Among the archives of Ichijō's family there is a letter addressed to the artist by Okubo Toshimitsu, one of the leading statesmen of the Restoration. It is couched in terms of the most profound politeness; it speaks of Ichijō's work as beautiful enough to "move the gods to tears;" it declares that the specimens just completed at the writer's request shall be treasured by him and his heirs so long as the house of Okubo lasts. The incentives that talent found in those days can thus be appreciated. Ichijō certainly deserved to be famous. He excelled in every kind of chiselling, though most of his finest work is in relief; he knew how to pro-

duce admirable decorative effects by combining metals of various colours; his range of motives was almost limitless, and the poetic feeling of some of his designs gives them a charm quite independent of their grand technique.

The difficulty experienced in attempting to set down any record of the metal-workers in the nineteenth century is that quite an embarrassing number of artists reached a standard entitling them to notice. The greatest do not stand as far above the general level as did the masters of preceding epochs, but, on the other hand, the general level in the nineteenth century was higher than it had ever been before. It can be said with confidence, however, that no school of experts contributed so much to the treasures of the time as did the representatives and disciples of the Ishiguro family. According to strict chronological order, this family should have been included in the annals of the eighteenth century, for its founder, Masatsune, who also must be called one of its greatest representatives, was born in 1757 and died in 1828. He is placed here, however, not only because much of the finest work of his mature years was executed in the nineteenth century, but also because all his successors and pupils flourished during the latter. The Ishiguro family carried the art to an extreme standard of elaboration. No subject was too intricate or too difficult for them, and it is probable that their works figure largely in foreign collections, for technical beauty and richness of general effect are qualities which appeal at once to the average dilettante. Masatsune had three art names:— *Jimiyo*, *Tōgakushi*, and *Jikokusai*—and during his youth he called himself Koretsune. He is thus often

confounded with his second son, Koretsune, — an equally great artist, — the confusion being augmented by the fact that among Koretsune's seven art names — *Tōgakuski*, *Ritsumei*, *Shinryo*, *Hōgyokusai*, *Gishinken*, *Kounken*, and *Ichiyeian* — the first was identical with one of Masatsune's. No less than forty-two experts belonged to the Ishiguro group, and every one of them contributed some good specimens to the treasures of the century. After Masatsune and Koretsune, the most renowned were Koreshige (art name, *Ichio*), a pupil of Koretsune; Koreo (art name, *Hakuunshi*), also a pupil of Koretsune; Yoshitsune (art names, *Senyushi*, *Gammon*, and *Tominsai*), grandson of Masatsune; Masayoshi (art name, *Jikosai*), a student of Masatsune; Koreyoshi (art names, *Jikakushi* and *Kwansai*), son of Masayoshi; Yoshisato (art name, *Jitekisai*), a pupil of Masayoshi who worked in Hizen; Haruaki, who received the highest art title of *Hōgen*; Masahiro (art names, *Gantōshi*, *Keiho*, *Kwakujusai*, and *Korinsha*), a pupil of Masatsune; Masakiyo (art name, *Jikiyokusai*); Masaharu and Kiyonari (art name, *Giyokkosai*). All of these, with the one exception noted in its place, worked in Yedo.

With the Ishiguro experts must be bracketed, in point of technical skill, the three families of Omori, Hamano, and Iwamoto. The origin of these has already been spoken of, and it will be sufficient to note here the celebrities that they severally contributed to the nineteenth century, namely: —

THE OMORI MASTERS AND THEIR PUPILS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Hidetomo; art name, *Riuriusai.* Yedo.
Hideyoshi; art name, *Ittokusai.* Yedo.
Hideyori. Hirado (Hizen).
Hidenori. Hirado.
Hidetomi. Sendai.
Hidekiyo. Yedo.
Kazutomo; art name, *Kenkōsai.* Yedo.
Tomochika; art name, *Riunsai.* Yedo.
Tomotsune. Yedo.
Terumoto. Yedo.

THE HAMANO MASTERS AND THEIR PUPILS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Shunzui, or Haruyori. Yedo.
Jūzui, or Hisayori. Yedo.
Shūzui, or Hideyori. Yedo.
Kiuzui, or Hisayori. Yedo.

THE IWAMOTO MASTERS AND THEIR PUPILS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Konju. Yedo.
Kwanri (end of eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century). Yedo.
Yeishu, or Yasuchika Shinsuke (end of eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century). Celebrated for Katakiri chiselling. Mito.
Riyōyei, or Suzuki Kinyemon. Celebrated for carving fish. Yedo.
Kwanjo.
Shōho, or Buto Gempachi, marked his works *Konkwan-mon.* Yedo.

The productions of the four families, Omori, Hamano, Iwamoto and Ishiguro, stand to the master-

pieces of the early metal-carvers in much the same relation as the *genre* pictures (*ukiyo-ye*), which had their development contemporaneously with the work of these families, stand to the paintings of the classical school. In reviewing Japanese pictorial art it has been shown that the popular school of painters, the Ukiyo-ye artists, were a natural outcome of the social evolution of their era, and that they reflected the nation's passage from the comparatively austere canons of a military age to the voluptuous ease and refinement of the later Tokugawa epochs. Similar evidence of the changes of the times might be expected to present themselves in the field of glyptic art. They do present themselves. The formal designs and uniform methods of chiselling *à jour* practised up to the middle of the fifteenth century represent the pure Chinese style, or, at any rate, were suggested by the classical spirit which then permeated every branch of the national civilisation. By and by, when the immortal painters Kano Masanobu and Kano Motonobu raised their art into a new realm of national inspiration, a corresponding impulse was felt in the domain of metal carving, and the Goto masters, shaking themselves partially free from classical fetters, began to seek decorative motives in the pages of recent history or among the natural objects that surrounded them. The work of the early Goto experts cannot, however, be assigned purely to any one academy. In their representations of historical scenes, warriors, and animals they followed the Tosa school with almost slavish accuracy. In their carvings of flowers, birds, and incidents from the daily life of the people, they took the Kano artists for models. And in their chiselling of dragons, Dogs of Fo, Kylin, phœnixes,

SWORD GUARDS. PLATE I.

1
By Tsuchiya Yasuchika.

2
By Jakusai.

3
By Nara Toshihis.

4
By Hamano Kōzui.

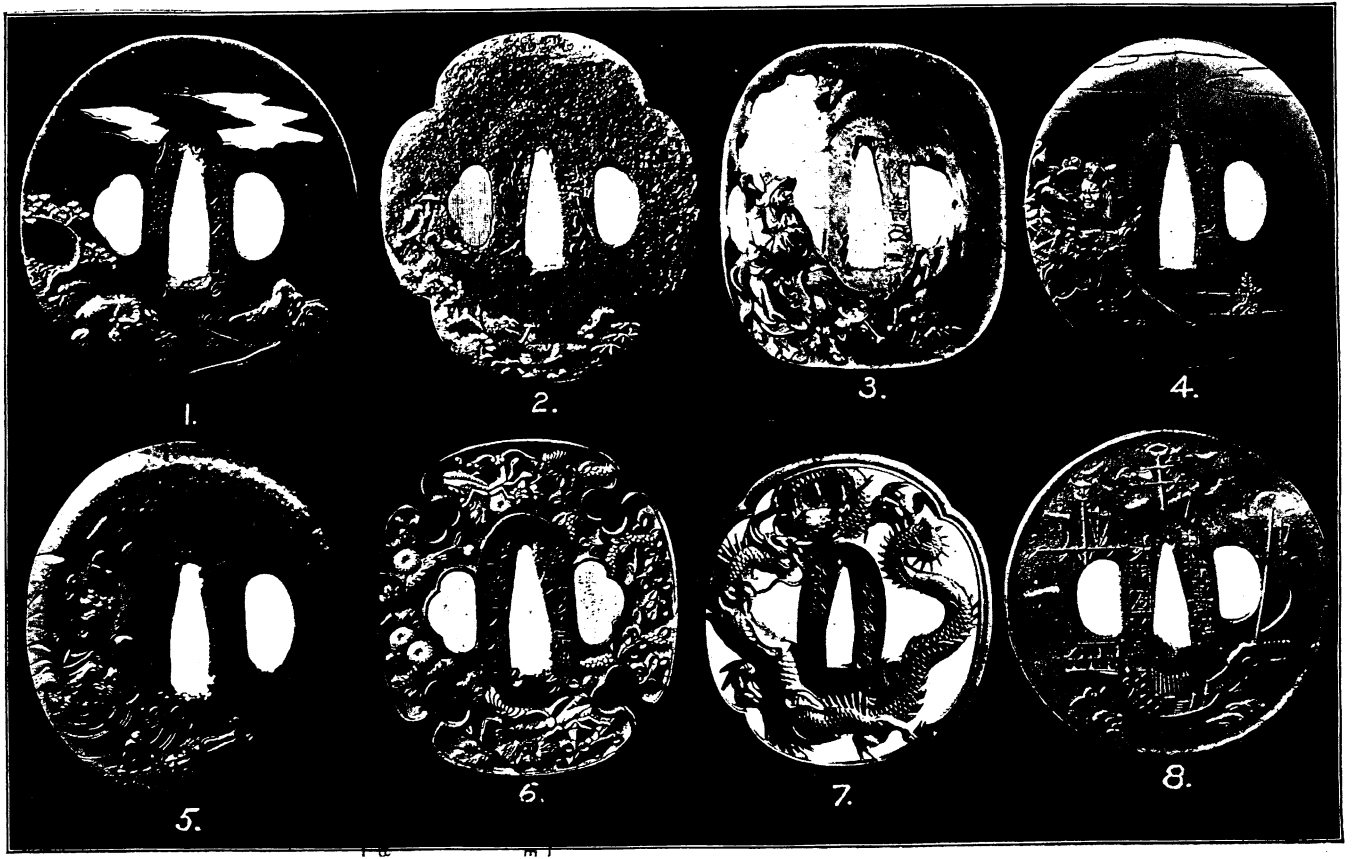
5
By Sugiura Tai.

6
By Kitagawa Sōden.

7
By Hagidani Katahei.

8
By Nakai Tomotsune.

(See page 296.)


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and supernatural beings, they saw nothing higher than Chinese types. They preserved, indeed, a closer touch with the Chinese school than with any other, for each scion of the family and each student in its ateliers commenced his education by learning how to carve a dragon, and in every Japanese collection of Goto masterpieces the *shishi*, the *kirin*, and the *ho-o* repeat themselves persistently. But even Yūjō himself did not recognise any limit to his range of motives, and, as has been already seen, he and his descendants must undoubtedly be credited with having opened a new vista to their art. The Nara school was the next link in the chain of evolution. Faithful to the fashions of the era in which it had its birth, it made a still wider departure from the classical style than the Goto experts had attempted, and drew its inspiration from the Kano and the Tosa schools only, combining the strength, realism, and softness of the former with the decorative splendour of the latter. The Yokoya masters went a step farther. It is true that they may be said to have revived the Chinese spirit, since linear force, directness, and vitality became, in their hands, paramount elements of glyptic skill. But in that respect they stand to their own branch of art as the Kano painters stood to theirs; if they followed the technical methods of the Chinese school, they derived their motives chiefly from Japanese life and annals. Side by side with the Yokoya masters, and in many respects closely connected with them, the Yanagawa, Kikuoka, Kikuchi, Yoshioka, and Kikugawa families produced works which correspond with the pictures of the naturalistic school of Kyōtō, the *Shijo* academy, which had its greatest representative in Maruyama Okio. Then finally came the four families forming

the popular school, the Omori, the Hamano, the Iwamoto, and the Ishiguro, to whom Gotō Ichijo must be added as an unsurpassed master of their style. It is difficult to convey in words any general idea of the luxury of decoration, delicacy of chiselling, poetry of motive, and, withal, simplicity of subject exhibited in the masterpieces of experts like Omori Teruhide, Iwamoto Konkwan, Hamano Noriyuki, Ishiguro Masatsune, and many of their disciples and followers, as well as their contemporary artists of the naturalistic school. Perhaps the best plan is to describe briefly a few specimens which may be regarded as fairly illustrative. Here, for example, is a *kozuka* by Ishiguro Koreyoshi. The metal is *shibuichi* and the ends are tipped with gold. It may be noted, *en passant*, that many of the finest *kozuka* produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have their ends and backs of gold, though the face is *shakudo*, *shibuichi*, or even copper. The *kozuka* in question is made throughout of *shibuichi*, except the gold-shod ends, but the back is richly inlaid with gold in the style called *kiribaku* (cut leaf); that is to say, tiny squares of gold are scattered evenly over the whole field. On the face is chiselled, in high relief, a hawk which has just lighted among the branches of a blossoming plum, and in the distance a sparrow is seen flying away. The hawk's grey plumage is excellently suggested by the patina of the *shibuichi*, and its feathers and crest are etched with a delicate damascening of gold. The plum blossoms are softly chiselled in silver, and the sparrow's russet colour is well rendered by the copper in which it is modelled. The reverse has this couplet engraved in cursive script: —

"Gone the old year,
Gone to his death;
Tears for his tomb.
Yet from his bier
Stealeth spring's breath
Of wafted plum." [1]

Here, again, are two *kozuka* by Gotō Ichijo. The first is of copper backed with gold. On the face, beautifully modelled in medium relief, are two golden mummers of the New Year, dancing, instinct with life, and above their heads the conventional decorations of the season hang, incised. On the back these lines are engraved: —

"Endless the ages shed on earth
Their gems of joy. Once more in truth
The jewel of a year's new birth,
Flashes the light of laughing youth
From fount and well. Each quickened tree
Gives pledge of leafy luxury.
A myriad signs of gladsome springs
And years untouched by pain or ruth
For you, my prince, this sunrise brings."

The second *kozuka* is of *shakudo*, wrought on both faces with fine-grained *nanako*. The design, chiselled in low relief and painted, — no other term applies to the skill of the manipulation, — painted with gold, silver, and bronze, is the rustic gate of a country cottage, overhung by pine-trees, and standing among feathery grasses of autumn. The tender restfulness of the picture is delightful. On the back are these lines: —

[1] The plum-blossom is the emblem of spring.

"One are our hearts, my wife's and mine.
Beyond the reach of withering years,
Beyond the sound of falling tears,
To skies spring sunshine always fills
The music of our love notes thrills,
Through the linked branches of the pine." [1]

Reference may finally be made to a *kozuka* and a *kōgai* chiselled by Watanabe Hisamitsu, a prominent representative of the popular school. Here the designs correspond exactly with pictures by Kiyonaga or Utamaro. On the copper face of the *kozuka*, chiselled in relief, is the celebrated "lady of the green hall," Takao. She is magnificently apparelled, and gold, *shakudo*, silver, and *shibuichi* are used with the most refined skill to indicate the rich brocades and crêpes that she wears. On the *kōgai* the same courtesan is shown in gentle dalliance with the ascetic Daruma. The backs of the *kozuka* and *kōgai* alike are of *shibuichi*, carrying the following inscriptions: —

Buddha sells doctrine. The expounder sells Buddha. The priest sells the expounder. You sell your five feet of body to nurture the lusts of humanity. Green is the willow; crimson the flower; many-coloured the ways of the world."

"A thousand nights, a thousand eves,
The soft moon sails the lake above;
No trace of her caresses leaves,
In the cold depths no ray of love."

In this century the Hirata family — spoken of already as the first to employ vitrifiable enamels in the decoration of sword-mounts — had its greatest master in the person of Harunari. One of his pupils,

[1] The pine-tree is one of the emblems of longevity.

Uchino Harutoshi (art name, Ichigenshi), was scarcely less celebrated, and four others helped, in a lesser degree, to perpetuate his fame. Later in the century Yedo produced an artist of the very highest skill, Kano Natsuo. He worked from 1850 to 1895, and certainly deserves to be called one of the most admirable chisellers of incised designs that Japan has known in any era. Natsuo learned the art, from Aoka Harutsura, of Kyōtō, himself a skilled expert; and Harutsura's teacher, Kajutsura, deserves to be mentioned as an exceptionally successful chiseller of insects. Natsuo's early works were chiefly chiselled in medium relief. His range of subjects was wide. He could represent a group of autumn flowers, a spray of plum, or a tiny insect as skilfully as a mythological figure or a historical scene. After fame and prosperity had come to him, he ceased to carve in relief, and confined himself to incised and *kata-kiri* chiselling, with results of which it would be difficult to write in too laudatory a strain. He did not easily accept an order or make any effort to produce largely. Genuine specimens of his work are therefore rare, and when one comes into the market, it is purchased by Japanese connoisseurs at a great price. Contemporary with Natsuo in the latter's early years was Honjo Yoshitane, of Yedo. He not only chiselled the mounts of swords but also forged their blades, and he is placed by his countrymen in the very foremost rank of artists. Yamagawa Koji, of Kanazawa (in Kaga), was another of the most prominent figures in the nineteenth century. He worked from 1830 to 1877, chiefly in the *kebori* and *kata-kiri* styles, and in his later years he received the name of "Kanazawa Sōmin" in recognition of his great abilities.

The Mito school was very active in the first half of the century. Several well-known experts were connected with it — as *Kwaizantei* (Motomichi) and his numerous pupils; *Ontaiken* (Motochska); *Chōoken* (Motonari); *Tosuiken* (Sadahisa), and others. The workshops in Aizu also turned out many specimens, but what has already been said of Mito and Aizu work in earlier times applies to the productions of the nineteenth century also: it was decorative rather than artistic. Many other names might be set down; notably those of Yoshioka Tadatsugu, of Yedo, whose pupils constituted a large and brilliant group; Tanaka Kiyohisa, of Yedo; Okano Kijiro, of Yedo, widely known under his art name of *Tōriusai*, whose reproductions of some of the choicest old masterpieces are probably treasured by many Occidental collectors as originals; Kawarabayashi Hidekuni (1860), of Kyōtō; and Oda Noaki (1830), of Satsuma, a splendid chiseller of decoration *à jour*. But the task of discrimination becomes exceedingly difficult in the nineteenth century, for although the general level of expert skill was higher than it had been in any previous era, few artists can be said to have attained conspicuous pre-eminence. An immense number of fine specimens were produced during the first seventy-five years of the century, and it is probable that if a careful examination were made of the best collections of Japanese sword-mounts in Europe and America, a great majority of the examples they comprise would be found to date from the epoch 1770 to 1780.

Special mention must be made of a group of five artists — Shūraku, Temmin, Riumin, Minjo, and Minkoku — who, in 1864, formed a guild (called *go-ningumi*) for the purpose of producing objects beyond the

strength of other experts. Their style was chiefly *kata-kiri*, and in addition to sword-furniture they turned out a quantity of *kana-mono*, that is to say, minor metal work of all descriptions. These men were all of the highest force.

Chapter IX

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

NO special reference has hitherto been made to a class of experts who performed preparatory work for glyptic artists. These were called *uchi-mono-shi*, or hammerers. Sometimes their names were cut upon a specimen side by side with those of the chisellers, but, as a rule, their work, being of a subordinate character, received no such recognition. Nevertheless their skill was often remarkable. Using the hammer only, some of them justly claimed ability to beat out an intricate shape as truly and delicately as a sculptor could carve it with his chisels. Ohori Masatoshi, an *uchi-mono-shi* of Aizu (D. 1897), made a silver cake-box in the form of a sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum. The shapes of the body and of the lid corresponded so intimately that whereas the lip could be slipped on easily and smoothly, without any attempt to adjust its curves to those of the body, it always fitted so closely that the box could be lifted by grasping the lid only. Another feat of his was to apply a lining of silver to a *shakudo* box by shaping and hammering only, the fit being so perfect that the lining clung like paper to every part of the box. Among the *uchi-mono-shi* now living, there is none that Japanese connoisseurs recognise as fully the peer of Masatoshi, but it must be confessed that the work of such men as Suzuki Gensuke and Hirata Sōkō does not seem capable of being sur-

passed. Hirata Sōkō recently exhibited in Tōkyō a silver game-cock with soft plumage and surface-modelling of the most delicate character. It had been made by means of the hammer only.

Suzuki Gensuke's name is associated with a *tour-de-force* which not only shows high skill but also gives very beautiful results. It is a process called *kiri-bame* (insertion). The decorative design, having been completely chiselled in the round, is then fixed in a field of different metal in which a design of exactly similar outline has been cut out *en bloc*. The result is that the picture has no blank reverse. For example, on the surface of a *shibu-ichi* box-lid are seen the backs of a flock of geese chiselled in silver, *shakudo*, and gold, and when the lid is opened, their breasts and the under-sides of their pinions appear. The difficulty of such work can be easily appreciated. It is necessary that microscope accuracy should be attained in cutting out the space for inserting the design, and further that the design should be soldered firmly in its place, while not the slightest trace of the solder, or the least sign of junction, must be discernible between the metal of the inserted picture and that of the field in which it is suspended. Suzuki Gensuke is not the only expert who works in this style, but to him it owes its origin.

In order to avoid confusion of nomenclature it will be well to refer here to another kind of work called *kiri-kame-zōgan* (inserted inlaying). Of this the originator was Toyoda Kokō. The gist of the process is that a design chiselled *à jour* has its outlines veneered with some other metal which serves to emphasise them. Thus, having pierced a spray of flowers in a thin sheet of *shibuichi*, the artist fits a

slender rim of gold, silver, or *shakudo* into the petals, leaves, and stalks. The rim has to be fitted exactly so that it shall seem to be a natural growth, not an artificial addition. The effect produced is that of transparent blossoms tipped with gold, silver, or dark-purple *shakudo*. Another achievement of Suzuki Gensuke is designated *maze-gane*, or "mixed metals." It is a singular conception, and the results obtained depend largely on chance. *Shibuichi* and *shakudo* are melted separately, and when they have cooled just enough not to mingle too intimately, they are cast into a bar (called *namako*) which is subsequently beaten flat. The plate thus obtained shows accidental effects of clouding, or massing of dark tones, and these patches are taken as the basis of a pictorial design to which final character is given by inlaying with gold and silver. Such pictures partake largely of an impressionist character, but they attain much beauty in the hands of the Japanese artist with his large *repertoire* of suggestive symbols.

Yet another device practised by Suzuki Gensuke is to mix two kinds of *shibuichi*, and having beaten them together, to add a third variety, after which the picture is completed by putting in rocks, trees, birds, etc., by the *kata-kiri* process. This method did not originate with Suzuki. It was employed by eighteenth-century experts, who gave to it the name of *shibuichi-dōshi*. But Suzuki has carried it to a point of unprecedented excellence. The charm of the *shibuichi-dōshi* and of the *maze-gane* processes is that certain parts of the decorative design seem to float, not on the surface of the metal, but actually within it, an admirable effect of depth and atmosphere being thus produced.

In describing the various processes of decorative metal-work for sword furniture, reference was made to *sumi-zōgan* — or so-called "sepia-inlaying" — which differs from ordinary inlaying in the fact that the decorative design, instead of being produced chiefly by means of gold or silver outlines, is first chiselled in complete form and afterwards bedded in the basic metal, its surface being finally ground down and polished, so as to produce not only perfect intimacy between the metals, but also an effect of high lights. The Japanese understood the value of lights in sculpture of all kinds. Even in deeply incised work like *kata-kiri*, one of their methods was to use a specially sharp chisel in certain parts of the design so as to convey the effect of polishing. The "sepia-inlaying" is a marked example of this theory, a peculiar glossiness being obtained by the high light of the polished surface, just as the ancient Greeks and Romans used to give to the nude parts of a statue a considerable degree of polish. The most remarkable development of the process is seen in the *togi-dashi-zōgan* (ground-out inlaying) invented by Kajima Ippu. In this exquisite and ingenious kind of work, the design appears to be growing up from the depths of the metal, and effects are produced which render it scarcely possible to believe that the picture has not been painted with the brush on some peculiarly receptive surface. As to the technique of *togi-dashi-zōgan*, the metal — generally *shibuichi* — is first treated as though for *nunome* damascening, the principal and secondary designs being carefully outlined. It is then passed through the furnace until it assumes a coppery hue, after which the design is overlaid with a thin film of *ao-gin* (specially prepared

gold), which bites into the *nunome*, and then with a wafer-like layer of silver. Next another equally slight coat of silver is beaten over the whole surface, the result being that the design shows out with a faint golden hue in a silver field, the detail, however, not being discernible, and the picture looking as though the artist had roughly dashed in a rudimentary design with light-gold pigment. The next step is to hammer or punch the details of the design so as to emphasise them, and finally the expert proceeds to polish the surface with strips of *toishi* (honing stone) bound together into a brush. The use of this peculiar instrument is tedious and demands delicate manipulation. Thus the various layers of metal are gradually ground down until the design emerges showing tints of all the metals employed — *shibuichi*, gold and silver. The *shibuichi* outlines assume the appearance of sepia drawing, and the general effect is that of a sepia picture in a silver field with a flush of gold looking out here and there. An impression of atmosphere and of water is obtained by this process with remarkable realism. Fishes appear to be swimming in silver water, some in the foreground, some in the background, and some in the middle-distance, and so perfect is the illusion that the body of a fish is sometimes seen partially emerging, partially disappearing, in the silvery fluid; flowers and sprays appear glowing in sunlight; birds beat the air with their wings, and landscapes lie bathed in soft hazes. The process not only entails great labour, but also demands an exercise of skill which does not appear to be within reach of any of the artists of the present day except Kajima Ippu.

Any account of metal-work in Japan must include

the uses to which pewter was put. Japanese pewter resembled that of England, being composed of eighty parts of tin to twenty of lead, without any antimony, zinc, nickel, arsenic, or cobalt. In China this alloy seems to have been employed from time immemorial, and although the first authentic reference to pewter in Japan does not take the student back farther than the second half of the eighth century A. D., the fact then recorded is not the introduction of the metal, but the substitution of Japanese tin for Chinese in its composition. The earliest purposes to which it was applied were to inlay lacquer in combination with mother-of-pearl and to make rims for lacquer boxes. By and by it began to be employed for making vessels — especially those used at marriage ceremonies — and it was then sometimes inlaid with gold, silver, brass, or even bronze. Many pewter tea-canisters are found, as well as vase-shaped wine bottles for placing before *Shintō* shrines. These tea-jars were frequently of very beautiful form and had cleverly executed decorative designs incised or pierced. The most interesting feature, however, of Japanese pewter is its patina. It has been shown that "when an alloy is in the act of cooling, several definite alloys, in which the molecules of the metal are differently grouped from those of the mass, fall out at definite temperature, so that the solidified metal does not consist really of one alloy, but is a mixture of several, more or less regularly diffused throughout its mass." This property is especially marked in the case of pewter. The Japanese had no thermo-electric pyrometer to enable them to discover it, but they detected it by observation sufficiently to take practical advantage of it. Thus their pewter jars have a very fine

surface consisting of dark grey patina over which darker patches are scattered, forming a clouded pattern. Some of these utensils are very valuable, more so even than the same weight of silver, especially when the mottling is uniform and well developed. The vessel is never polished, but only rubbed from time to time with cotton or silk cloth, the result being that the surface gradually becomes coated with a fine grey patina of two tints, the lighter forming the ground. The action of the air and the gentle rubbing make visible one or more of the alloys which have fallen out in cooling.[1]

Reference must also be made to a recently introduced alloy consisting of eighty-five parts of lead and fifteen of antimony. The compound is largely used to manufacture cheap and gaudy utensils, such as flower-vases, cigar-trays, tobacco-ash-holders, etc., which are loaded with decorative designs in the *repoussé* style, gilded in parts or otherwise coloured. This "antimony ware" is cast in brass moulds. Its effect is not unpleasing, but it can scarcely be classed among art-products. The inventor (1885) was Suzuki Kichigoro.

The Japanese artist, or artisan, may be generally described as modest, unassuming, and unavaricious. The gain that his works bring is the last thing he considers. Affluence comes to him rarely, but to gird at the companionship of poverty would be to proclaim himself not an artist but a tradesman.[2] The records of all these men and the traditions relating to them indicate the prevalence of a rooted belief that to be great in art a lofty and benevolent disposition is essential. Kaigyokusai's habit of giving away all his

[1] See Appendix, note 48.

[2] See Appendix, note 49.

money in charity was regarded as an indication of his artistic sense, and it is confidently believed that Yasumoto Kamekichi's carving is inferior to that of Matsumoto Kisaburo because the latter was profusely generous whereas the former has none of the milk of human kindness. The Japanese artist is content to work amid the humblest surroundings and to live in the most frugal manner. He attaches no special value to the products of his skill, regarding them merely as studies preparatory to better efforts. Many art-artisans rose to fame from the lowliest positions. Teijo was originally a barber; Kuribara Keishi kept a bean-curd booth; Okazaki Sessei served as a common menial in his youth. Innumerable instances of that kind might be quoted, but there is not any example of an artist who was ashamed of his insignificant beginnings. Shame seems to have been confined to association with inferior work. Hojutsu, the celebrated ivory-carver, destroyed many works on the eve of completion, and it was Zengoro Hozen's habit to bake three examples of every fine piece of pottery or porcelain, keeping only the best of the three and breaking the other two.

With regard to the training of the art-artisan, it was generally obtained by apprenticeship in the atelier of some master. Naturally there were cases of men who began to work without any instruction. Matsumoto Kisaburo commenced his career by making a statue of an idiot woman whom he saw begging in the streets of Kumamoto; Ikko was counted an imbecile up to the age of nineteen, but subsequently became a famous carver without studying under any master; Ogino Shōmin, Tomochika, Hojutsu, all were denied the advantage of a teacher, and Itao

Shinjiro had not received any training when he executed his first work, a model of a foreign steamer which he saw coming into port. The general rule, however, was a long apprenticeship. The sculptor of wood commenced his course in the atelier by chiselling a decorative pattern of formal type, in order that he might acquire skill in spacing. He then passed to the carving of floral scrolls, especially the leaves of the *asa* (hemp-plant). The next stage was to shape a *Daikoku* deity of affluence and then an *Yebisu* (deity of fortune). These figures were in the form known as *deki-ai-butsu* (ready-made Buddha): the hands and arms were not shown and the drapery was roughly blocked out. Thereafter the student passed to the *chiu-butsu* (middle-class Buddha), showing the hands and arms; and finally he arrived at the *jōbutsu* (first-class Buddha), complete in every detail. This course occupied from seven to ten years, and the student was now regarded as *ichinin-maye*, or an adult artisan. Under no circumstances was he allowed to use rule or compass: everything had to be done by eye. The modeller in wax for purposes of bronze-casting, equally with the sculptor of metal or wood, had no guide except a sketch drawn by himself or furnished by some pictorial artist. There was no question of pins to map out the surface, or of a pointer to transfer contours. Further, it was always a supreme test of the artist's skill that he should be able to achieve the desired result with a minimum of labour. Thus the ivory-carver Tomochika received applause for his ability to block out a statue by means of a hatchet only,[1] finishing it off with the knife (*ogatana*); whereas lesser experts used the *kogatana* from the first.

[1] See Appendix, note 50.

SWORD GUARDS. PLATE II.

1
By Nara Toshihisa.

2
By Umetada Shigeyoshi.

3
By Yanagawa Naomasa

4
By Nara Toshihisa.

5
By Nara Toshiharu.

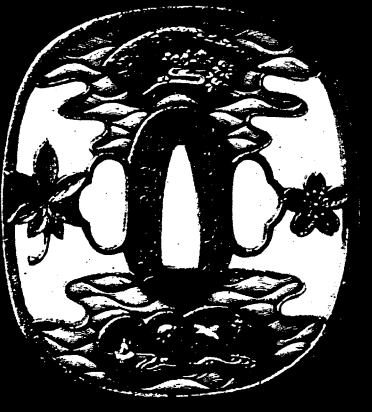
6
By Miyochin Muneakira.

7
By Yokaya Sōmin

(See page 296.)



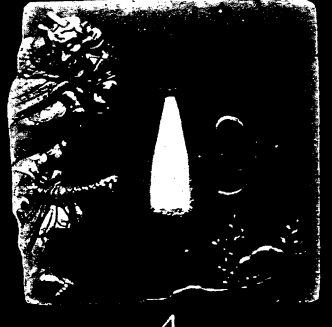
1.



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3.



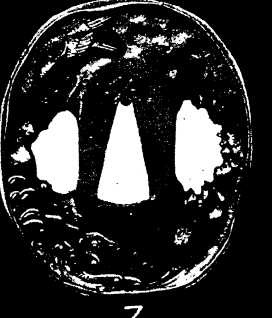
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7.

In a great majority of cases the Japanese art-artisan deemed it essential that he should go through a course of pictorial training in the studio of some famous artist; that he should study the composition of poems, and that he should be versed in the cult of the tea-clubs as well as in the science of flower-arranging and incense-judging. The possession of these accomplishments did not, however, interfere with his discharge of the rougher duties of his craft. It will often be found that a man working daily as a common carpenter or joiner can not only design and execute, but also sketch with accuracy and grace, an elaborate decorative composition.

As to the source from which the Japanese sculptor obtained designs, it is probably correct to say that, as a general rule, he relied on the pictorial artist. This statement does not apply, of course, to all the great masters of early, mediæval or modern times. It is recorded that Takahashi Kinai fell into disgrace because he sold a hen supplied as a model by the feudal chief of Echizen; that the same artist refused to chisel a centipede on a sword-guard because he had already committed the sin of killing dozens of these insects for the purposes of a previous carving; that Kogitsune sat for ten days and nights in the open air at Mukuni in order to see a dragon in a whirlwind; that Natsuo placed a peony in his garden as a study but found no inclination to chisel a copy of the flower until he chanced to see it, one day, tossed by the wind. These and many other instances showed that renowned experts often went direct to nature for models. On the other hand it is recorded with at least equal frequency that recourse was had to contemporary painters even by the greatest masters, and

the conclusion is that the average sculptor, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, seldom looked beyond the pages of some album of designs drawn by pictorial celebrities.

It is the more necessary to insist upon the high moral character of the Japanese artist or art-artisan because Americans and Europeans seldom have an opportunity of judging him by direct intercourse. There is always a middle-man whose cupidity reacts upon the artist's reputation. Nor can it be denied that his relations with the modern middle-man as well as the greatly changed nature of the clients whose tastes he has to consult have more or less impaired the art-artisan's morals. In former times, the sculptor of sword-furniture, for example, had direct contact with the great nobles, statesmen, and soldiers of his time. He received art-titles venerated since the earliest epochs; he was munificently rewarded by official recognition if he made any signal success; his fame was not merely his own but belonged also to the fief claiming his allegiance; a liberal pension placed him beyond the chill of poverty and enabled him to devote the labour of love to his work. All these conditions underwent a radical alteration after the fall of feudalism. The numerous principalities which had supported their own artists and vied with one another to attract and retain the best skill in each era, ceased to exist. The patrician class, munificent and appreciative patrons of art in all ages, stepped down from their commanding positions to make way for the merchant and the manufacturer. The representatives of the feudal nobility ceased to maintain throughout the empire splendid dwellings — palaces they might be called — for whose interior adornment

the services of the artists had always been in keen request. The sword and all its trappings, the suit of armour and its elaborate decoration, which during long centuries had offered an unlimited field for the exercise of glyptic skill, were discarded permanently. The temple and the mausoleum no longer demanded the services of sculptors, metal-workers, lacquerers, architects, and painters. To keep in even partial repair a few of these magnificent structures seemed to overtax the liberality of a generation whose forefathers had bequeathed to them such noble monuments of art and refinement. Virtually the only clients that offered themselves under the new regimen were foreigners, to whom Japanese art was an unknown land; whose standards of excellence were greatly at variance with Japanese standards; who in most cases approached every Oriental production with a strong pre-disposition to hold it in light esteem, and to insist that wherever its features differed from their own tastes, the fault lay with the features, and who generally regarded the whole question from a mercantile point of view, preferring to dispense with really fine artistic qualities rather than to obtain them at the risk of trafficking in costly articles. It will be understood that these remarks apply mainly to foreign communities who settle in Japan for commercial purposes, and only in a limited degree to connoisseurs in Europe and America. The former certainly helped to find a market for a certain class of Japanese art-products in the years immediately subsequent to the fall of the old system. But for a long time it was a market which exercised a most vitiating influence on those that catered for it. The foreign exporter worked through the Japanese middle-

man, and by the latter, generally an ill-educated, vulgar person, artists and art-artisans were taught to interpret in undeservedly low terms the requirements of the foreign trader and, vicariously, the tendencies of foreign taste. They were taught something else also. It became their business to devote the resources of their skill not merely to imitating, but also to forging, the works of the old masters. Imitation is fair enough so long as it is frank; but when its purpose is to pass off a counterfeit for a genuine object, the artist himself suffers more than the purchaser. The latter acquires at any rate a specimen of fine workmanship, but the former learns to think that successful simulation is the highest aim of his art, that it is hopeless to win fame by his own unequivocal efforts, and that, even though conscious of being able to surpass the masters whose productions he is required to imitate, he must subserve his talents to the demands of an avaricious middle-man and an undiscerning public. The science of forgery in Japan was not invented in modern times. The reader has seen that among the noted experts of former eras, some are remembered for their skill in re-producing old masterpieces. Craft of that kind will always be practised so long as humanity is human. But in no pre-*Meiji* period did there exist an organised conspiracy to deceive the public; its discovery would have been inevitable. The element needed to make such a thing possible was a foreign market. The foreign buyer is an ideal victim. He has no direct access to the artist and cannot form any accurate conception of the latter's capacities or make any scrutiny into the methods he is pursuing. The statements of the middle-man are his gospel — statements transmitted through an inter-

preter who himself takes an interested hand in the game. Add to this that the average foreign tourist carries with him to Japan, and the average foreign resident retains throughout his sojourn there, a secret conviction that art-treasures are lying around waiting to be picked up by any really astute gleaner, and that the gathering must be done privately lest others enter the field. The situation is perfectly gauged and adroitly exploited by the Japanese middle-man. He knows well that the pride of acquisition influences many collectors more than the merit of a specimen, and that nine *bric-à-brac* hunters out of every ten are ready to be persuaded that fortune treats them with special favour, and that for them alone gems of applied art have been waiting swathed in brocade and laid by in the recesses of a dealer's strong room. Some of the best experts are in the exclusive employment of a middle-man. They obey their employer reluctantly but faithfully, and at his request devote their abilities to forging "old masterpieces" with which he delights credulous collectors. It does not follow that the collector is seriously victimised. The specimens he acquires are almost if not quite as good from an artistic or a technical point of view as the originals they simulate, and though more costly than frankly modern objects, they are cheaper than genuine old ones. The artist is the chief sufferer, since he is obliged to efface himself for the sake of a fraud, and the art since its progress is checked for the sake of dishonest gain. Fortunately this evil state of affairs is disappearing. A new class of middle-men have appeared who eschew deception and rely upon clients that patronise good work without regard to its antiquity.

There are objects generally excluded by their nature from the catalogue of art productions, but nevertheless often showing in Japan many fine features of decorative sculpture. These are nail-hiders[1] (*kagi-kakushi*), screen-mounts, door-pulls, drawer-handles, and wardrobe hinges. When the *Taikō* built the Palace of Pleasure at Fushimi and the Castle of Ōsaka, the celebrated dilettante Kobori Masakazu undertook to make designs for these objects, and Kacho, an expert worker in metals, reproduced the drawings in silver, gold, bronze, iron, *shakudo* and *shibuichi*. Considering the great skill that had already been attained by sculptors of sword-furniture, it is not wonderful that a metal-worker at the close of the sixteenth century should have been able to chisel nail-hiders in the form of daffodils with leaves of silver and blossoms of gold, or door-pulls in the shape of crustacea, cherry-petals, junk-rudders, and such things. But Kacho's productions, judged by specimens preserved in the Kyōtō Detached Palace, were of a type that has seldom been surpassed by any of the innumerable sculptors subsequently employed in the decoration of Japanese interiors. He was followed by a long line of skilled metal-workers down to the present day, but their productions do not lend themselves to any special analysis. Kacho is the first artist whose name has been transmitted to posterity in connection with work of this class, but there are relics which show that the skill of the metal-chiseller was employed for the architectural decoration of interiors as early as the beginning of the twelfth century. Notable examples are the gilt-bronze ornaments of the ventilating panels at the temple

[1] See Appendix, note 51.

Chiuson-ji (founded in 1109). In the centre are plaques with *repoussé* designs of phœnixes and angels, and the borders have floral diapers, vajras, and bells sculptured *à jour*. From such work to the use of wood-carving for interior decoration, as seen in temples and mausolea from the close of the sixteenth century, the transition is easily conceived.

ENAMEL DECORATION

The term "enamel decoration" is here used to indicate a design expressed by means of vitrified pastes of various colours applied to a base usually of metal but sometimes of wood or porcelain. Oxide of lead and silica, mixed in the ratio of 35 to 50, approximately, with small quantities of lime and soda and a very small admixture of magnesia, form the paste, and colour is obtained by adding oxide of copper, iron, cobalt, gold, tin, silver, antimony, or some other substance. The paste thus produced is of two kinds, translucid or opaque, and is applied to the base in one of two ways, namely, by channelling the parts of the design into which the paste is to be inserted, or by framing them with thin ribbons of metal. The former kind — *i. e.* where the spaces to receive the enamel paste are recessed — is called *champlevé;* the latter is known as *cloisonné*. For these terms the best English equivalents are, perhaps, "encausted" and "applied," respectively, but since the French words are much more explicit and expressive, they will be used here. Doubtless the *champlevé* process preceded the *cloisonné*, but in Japan, as in Europe, there is no certainty on that point.

Neither is it possible to determine with any accuracy the time when the art of enamel decoration began to be practised in Japan. Among the relics of the Nara Court preserved in the *Shōsō-in* there is a mirror having on its back a floral design executed in *cloisonné* enamel. The inclusion of this mirror in the *Shōsō-in* treasures shows that it dates from a period certainly not later than the eighth century, but connoisseurs are not agreed in regarding it as Japanese workmanship. The *cloisons*, or metal ribbons framing the limbs of the designs, are of gold; the colours of the enamels are blue, yellow, green, and brown, and the edges of the *cloisons* project above the paste, indicating that the surface of the work was not ground down, or polished, after firing.

A few words have to be inserted here about the technique of enamel decoration. The object to be decorated having been fashioned in thin copper — sometimes in gold or silver — is handed to the enameller, or to a draughtsman, who traces on it with Indian-ink a facsimile of the design to be executed. The next step is to make the *cloisons* and fix them in position. This is one of the most delicate parts of the work. A narrow ribbon of copper or gold is cut into sections of various lengths, and these having been curved into the required form, are soldered to the surface of the object so that the design is ultimately outlined by a thin wall, following every line exactly and enclosing the space to be decorated. The various enamel pastes are then packed into the parts within this wall, and the vessel, having been placed in the oven, is subjected to heat sufficient to vitrify the pastes without affecting the metals forming the base and the *cloisons*. It will of course be

understood that when the base is of wood, the enamel design, separately manufactured, is inserted, when complete, in the wood. The melting process reduces the volume of the enamel paste, so that, when the vessel emerges from the oven after the firing, the spaces within the *cloisons* are found to be only partially filled. An additional quantity of paste has to be inserted, and once more the object is placed in the oven. This process has sometimes to be repeated several times before the cloisonned spaces are sufficiently full. Moreover, since all the pastes do not fuse at the same temperature, there is here another reason for independent firings, and risks are thus introduced which sometimes prove fatal after an object has been almost completed. Finally, the vitrified pastes having completely filled the cloisonned spaces, the whole surface is ground and polished with great care until it becomes perfectly even and shows a soft lustre. Thus finished, the enamel is known in Japan as *kazari-jippō* (ornamental enamel). The grinding and polishing process is often dispensed with, especially when translucid pastes are employed. Enamel decoration of the latter class is called *nagashi-jippō* (poured enamel).

The term *shippō* (*jippō* in composition) literally signifies "seven precious things." It was used originally to designate gold, silver, and various jewels about the names of which there is some uncertainty. In China the use of jewels to decorate vessels of gold, silver, or bronze was practised at a remote epoch, and to such objects the designation *shippō* was applied. There can be little doubt that vitrifiable pastes were soon employed as a substitute for jewels in this kind of decoration, and that *champlevé* enamelling thus

came into vogue, the *cloisonné* method being a subsequent modification. Unfortunately no distinctive term was devised for the paste jewels. They also received the name *shippō*, and a source of error was thus introduced, later generations having no means of discriminating whether a vessel described as being of *shippō* had decoration of the "seven precious things" or of vitrified enamels.

The mirror referred to above as forming part of the *Shoso-in* collection dating from the eighth century[1] has decoration in *nagashi-jippō*, namely, the unpolished style, and is of comparatively crude manufacture. It is the earliest known specimen of *cloisonné* enamel preserved in Japan, but there can be little doubt that vitrified pastes had been previously employed in the same manner. Among the contents of the dolmens, which certainly do not belong to a period more recent than the fourth or fifth century of the Christian era, great quantities of coloured glass beads are found, and it is thus evident that long before the *Shoso-in* collection was formed, the Japanese understood the manufacture of vitrifiable paste. But there are apparently no means of determining the exact date when *champlevé* or *cloisonné* enamel had its origin in Japan.

One thing, however, is certain; namely, that until the nineteenth century enamels were employed by the Japanese decorators for accessory purposes only. No such things were manufactured as vases, plaques, censers, or bowls having their surface covered with enamels applied either in the *champlevé* or the *cloisonné* style. In other words, none of the objects to which European and American collectors give the term

[1] See Appendix, note 52.

"enamels" was produced by a Japanese artist prior to the year 1838. It is necessary to insist upon this fact because one of the most notable exponents of Japanese art, the late Mr. J. L. Bowes, who alone has hitherto undertaken to discuss Japanese enamels at any length, fell into the serious error of imagining that numerous enamelled vessels which began to be exported to Europe from the year 1865, were the outcome of industry commencing in the sixteenth century and reaching its point of culmination at the beginning of the eighteenth. In his work "Japanese Decorative Art," Mr. Bowes divided these objects into three classes, "early, middle-period, and modern," and he subsequently supported his views in an elaborately reasoned thesis called "Notes on Shippō." There is not the slenderest ground for such a theory.[1] It certainly seems somewhat strange that whereas vases and censers of *cloisonné* enamel manufactured in China came to Japan during the latter part of the *Ming* era and throughout the whole of the *Tsing* — in other words, from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth — similar works were not executed by the Japanese. The explanation is that these specimens did not appeal strongly to Japanese taste: they never won the approval of the tea-clubs, which was essential to the recognition of any object as an art treasure. For such purposes as the decoration of *kugi-kakushi* (metal ornaments used to conceal the heads of nails in the interiors of houses), beads (*ōjime*) and clasps (*kagami-buta* or *kana-mono*) for pouches, recessed handles of sliding-doors, or metal plates and caps on woodwork, vitrifiable pastes, whether translucid or opaque, seemed suitable. The artists employed by the *Taikō*

[1] See Appendix, note 53.

to decorate the interior of the "Palace of Pleasure" at Fushimi, and those engaged upon the mausolea of the Tokugawa, used enamels very effectively in subordinate positions. It has been suggested that the work of this kind was entrusted by the *Taikō* to Korean experts, and there is no doubt that the process of *cloisonné* enamelling was well understood by the Koreans in the sixteenth century, if not earlier. They used twisted wire to form the *cloisons*, in which respect their technique ranked below that of the Japanese; but they obtained finer colours, their purple especially being remarkable for purity and richness. Considering how large a debt Japanese applied art owed to Korean assistance at the close of the sixteenth century, and considering that, with the exception of the mirror of Shomu, mentioned above, there is scarcely any evidence pointing to the use of *cloisonné* enamels for decorative purposes in Japan prior to that epoch,[1] it would certainly be rash to dismiss the theory of Korean instruction. Another suggestive fact is that the employment of enamels in the decoration of sword-furniture began at the same time. Its originator was Hirata Hikoshiro (art name *Dōnin*), and the representatives of his family, down to modern times, continued to use enamel in that way, their productions finding considerable favour. Indeed, the name "Hirata" became so intimately associated with work of this nature that in later times an erroneous theory found credence to the effect that *Dōnin* was the inventor of *cloisonné* enamel in Japan. The only credit justly belonging to the Hirata artists was that they applied enamels to sword-furniture, and that they alone could produce a white paste successfully.

[1] See Appendix, note 54.

White enamel has always been the most difficult of all the pastes to obtain perfectly pure, and purple stands next on the list. Ability to produce a fine, speckless white constituted the only specialty of the Hirata family, and because they jealously guarded the secret of the process, tradition magnified their share in employing enamels generally. It is undeniable, however, that they showed great skill in decorating sword-furniture with vitrified pastes. They never covered the surface of a sword-guard or a dagger-haft with such ornamentation, but merely used the enamels to fill in floral designs, arabesques, scrolls, or mosaics enclosed in small medallions. Generally the pastes were polished (*kazari-jippō*) but occasionally they were of the *nagashi-jippo* style. Nor were they always fired *in situ*. A not uncommon method (called *ji-ita-jippō*) was to complete the enamel design independently and then embed it in the metal field. By recourse to the latter device enamels could be used for decorating lacquered objects having a wooden base, and they were so used from the middle of the eighteenth century, especially in the ornamentation of *inro* (medicine-boxes suspended from the girdle). It may be added that the vitrified pastes of the Hirata family, and of other artists who freely imitated their work and even used their signatures were sometimes opaque (*doro-jippō*) and sometimes translucid (*suki-jippō*).

Kaji Tsunekichi, a *samurai* of Owari fief, was the first Japanese to manufacture *cloisonné* enamels of the kind known in the Occident by this name; that is to say, plates, vases, and censers having the surface entirely covered with vitrified pastes disposed in designs by means of *cloisons*. Like many other *samurai* Kaji,

finding his official income insufficient for the wants of his family, sought to supplement it by pursuing a handicraft, and at twenty years of age — he was born in 1802 — he took up the occupation of a metal-plater. According to his own account of his career, he chanced, in 1830, to read in a book of the sixteenth century that the materials for *shippō* decoration were coral, *lapis lazuli*, mother-of-pearl, agate, amber, tortoise-shell, and rock-crystal. There was here no question of vitrified pastes, but actually of the "seven precious things." The idea suggested to Kaji Tsunekichi seems to have been that these substances were actually used for making vitrifiable pastes, but his misconception was corrected two years later by examination of a specimen of Chinese *cloisonné* enamel[1] which he obtained from a merchant, Matsuoka Kahei, of Nagoya. He now applied himself with patient assiduity to work of this kind, and succeeded, in 1839, in making a plate, six inches in diameter, which he sold to Matsuoka for five *riyo*. This achievement inspired still greater efforts. Various articles were turned out, chiefly pen-rests, desk-screens, cups, and such small specimens, and in 1839 he had the honour of seeing his productions presented to the Tokugawa Court in Yedo by the feudal chief of Owari as examples of the technical achievements of the fief. Orders now came to Kaji and he enjoyed a time of comparative prosperity. In 1853 he began to take pupils, and made known the manufacturing processes to several persons. Thus, during twenty years previous to the re-opening of the country to foreign trade in 1857, *cloisonné* enamelling had been applied in the manner now understood by the term, and when for-

[1] See Appendix, note 55.

eign merchants began to settle in Yokohama in 1858, several experts were working skilfully in Owari after the methods of Kaji Tsunekichi. Up to that time there had been little demand for enamels of large dimensions, but when the foreign market called for vases, censers, plaques, and such things, no difficulty was experienced in supplying them. Thus, about the year 1865, there commenced an export of enamels which had no prototypes in Japan, being destined frankly for European and American collectors. From a technical point of view these works had much to commend them. The base — usually of copper — was as thin as cardboard; the *cloisons*, exceedingly fine and delicate, were laid on with care and accuracy; the colours were even, and the design showed artistic judgment. Two faults, however, marred the work: first, the shapes were clumsy and unpleasing, being, in fact, copied from bronzes where solidity justified forms unsuited to thin enamelled vessels; secondly, the colours, sombre and somewhat impure, lacked the glow and mellowness that give decorative superiority to the technically inferior Chinese enamels of the later *Ming* and early *Tsing* eras. Very soon, however, the artisans of Nagoya (Owari), Yokohama, and Tōkyō — where the art had been taken up — found that faithful and fine workmanship did not pay. The foreign export merchant desired many and cheap specimens for export rather than few and costly. There followed then a period of gradual decline, and the enamels exported to Europe were products of a widely different character and of different makers. The industry was threatened with extinction and would certainly have dwindled to insignificant dimensions had not a few earnest artists, working in the face of

many difficulties and discouragements, succeeded in striking out new lines and establishing new standards of excellence. The main features of this fresh departure were, first, that the character of the decorative designs was changed, and, secondly, that the quality and range of the colours underwent great improvement. Three clearly differentiated schools came into existence. One, headed by Namikawa Yasuyuki, of Kyōtō, took for its objects the utmost delicacy and perfection of technique, richness of decoration, purity of design, and harmony of colours. The thin, clumsily shaped vases of the Kaji school, with their uniformly distributed decoration of diapers, scrolls, and arabesques in comparatively dull colours, ceased altogether to be produced, their place being taken by graceful specimens technically flawless and carrying designs not only free from stiffness but also executed in colours at once rich and soft.

The next school may be subdivided, Kyōtō representing one branch, Nagoya, Tōkyō, and Yokohama the other. In the products of the Kyōtō branch the decoration generally covered the whole surface of the piece; in the products of the other branch the artist aimed rather at pictorial effect, placing the design in a monochromatic field of low tone.[1] Many exquisite specimens of *cloisonné* enamels have been produced by each branch of this school. There is nothing like them to be found in any other country, and they stand at an immeasurable distance above the works of early Owari experts represented by Kaji Tsunekichi, his pupils and colleagues.

The second of the modern schools is headed by Namikawa[2] Sosuke, of Tōkyō. It is an easily traced

[1] See Appendix, note 56.

[2] See Appendix, note 57.

outgrowth of the second branch of the first school, just described; for one can readily understand that from placing the decorative design in a monochromatic field of low tone, which is essentially a pictorial method, development would proceed in the direction of concealing the mechanics of the art in order to enhance the pictorial effect. Thus arose the so-called "cloisonless enamels" (*musen-jippō*). They are not always without *cloisons*. The design is generally framed, at the outset, with a ribbon of thin metal, precisely after the manner of ordinary *cloisonnē* ware. But as the work proceeds the *cloisons* are hidden, — unless their presence would contribute to give necessary emphasis to the design, — and the final result is a picture in vitrified enamels. This remarkable *tour de force* has created some discussion. There are those that question whether the principles of true art are not violated when an attempt is made to produce pictorial effects by the aid of such materials as vitrified pastes. The purist may find that objection unanswerable. Yet it seems to be opposed to the practice of artists in all ages. Neither in ancient nor in modern Europe has any canon been obeyed that sets limits to the range of decorative motives. If the sculptor may apply to a frieze or the keramist to a vase subjects of which the technical and artistic quality is estimated by their fidelity to nature, why should similar latitude be denied to an artist working with enamels? At all events it is certain that fine specimens of *musen-jippō* are beautiful objects. They are imperishable pictures in vitrified pastes, remarkable as to technical skill, harmonious and at the same time rich in colouring, and possessing pictorial qualities which could not reasonably have been looked for in such material.

The characteristic productions of the third among the modern schools are monochromatic and translucid enamels. All students of the keramic art know that the monochrome porcelains of China owe their beauty chiefly to the fact that the colour is in the glaze, not under it. The keramist finds no difficulty in applying an uniform coat of pigment to porcelain biscuit and covering the whole with a diaphanous glaze. The colour is fixed and the glaze set by secondary firing at a lower temperature than that necessary for hardening the *pâte*. Such porcelains lack the velvet-like softness and depth of tone so justly prized in the genuine monochrome, where the glaze itself contains the colouring matter, *pâte* and glaze being fired simultaneously at the same high temperature. It is apparent that a vitrified enamel may be set to perform, in part at any rate, the function of a porcelain glaze. Acting upon that theory, the experts of Tōkyō and Nagoya have produced, during recent years, many very beautiful specimens of monochrome enamels, — yellow (canary or straw), *rose du Barry*, liquid-dawn red, aubergine purple, grass or leaf green, dove-grey, and *lapis lazuli* blue. These pieces do not quite reach the level of Chinese monochrome porcelains, but their inferiority is not marked. The artist's great difficulty is to hide the metal base completely. A monochrome loses much of its attractiveness when the colour merges into a metal rim, or when the interior of a specimen is covered with crude, unpolished paste. But to spread and fix the paste so that neither at the rim nor in the interior shall there be any break of continuity or any indication that the base is metal not porcelain, is a *tour de force* demanding extraordinary skill.

The translucid enamels of the modern school are generally associated with decorated bases. In other words, a suitable design is chiselled in the metal base so as to be seen through the diaphanous enamel. Very beautiful effects of broken and softened light combined with depth and delicacy of colour are thus obtained. But the decorative designs which lend themselves to such a purpose are not numerous. A gold base deeply chiselled in wave-diaper and overrun with a paste of aubergine purple, is among the most pleasing. A still higher *tour de force* is to apply to the chiselled base designs executed in coloured enamels, finally covering the whole with translucid paste. Admirable results are thus obtained. Through a medium of cerulean blue bright gold-fish and steel-backed carp appear swimming in silvery waves, or brilliantly plumaged birds seem to soar among fleecy clouds. The artists of this school show also much skill in using enamels for purposes of subordinate decoration — for example, suspending enamelled butterflies, birds, floral sprays, etc., among the reticulations of a silver vase chiselled *à jour* (this kind of work is called *hirado-jippō*); or filling with translucid enamels parts of a decorative scheme sculptured in iron, silver, gold, or *shakudo*.

The reader will perceive at once what great strides Japanese workers in *cloisonnē* enamels have made since the days when they sent to Europe specimens such as those carefully classified and illustrated in "The Decorative Arts of Japan." It is not incorrect to say that the art of *cloisonnē* enamelling in Japan was developed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century from a condition of comparative crudeness[1]

[1] See Appendix, note 58.

to one of unparalleled excellence. There was no reason to anticipate that the Japanese would take the lead of the world in this branch of applied art. They had no presumptive title to do so. Yet they certainly have done so.

There has been discussion among Occidental connoisseurs about the relative merits of the *cloisonné* enamels of China and Japan. It has been maintained that Japanese productions look sombre and flimsy, and that the advantage is with the Chinese in restful solidity, as well as depth, purity, and harmony of tone. The criticism appears just so long as Japan is represented solely by the works of the school founded by Kaji Tsunekichi and maintained by his pupils and successors down to the year 1880. But at the latter date the Japanese expert entered an entirely new field where he completely distanced his Chinese rival. The artists of the two countries now work on lines so different that accurate comparison is scarcely possible. But it must not be assumed that the Japanese expert would find difficulty in adopting the Chinese methods. There has been practical proof to the contrary. Between the years 1850 and 1870 Maizono Genwo of Kanazawa, a pupil of Kaji Tsunekichi and subsequently of a Chinese expert in Nagasaki, produced several specimens of *cloisonné* enamels in the pure Chinese style. They were of small dimensions, chiefly *sake*-cups and bowls; the *cloisons* were of gold or silver, and the colour and quality of the paste as well as the general technique were indistinguishable from the finest Chinese work. Some experts of the present time, also, have conceived the idea of adding the Chinese style to their various accomplishments and have succeeded thoroughly.

LACQUER

It has been held by many critics that lacquered objects stand highest among the products of Japan's applied art, first because the quality of the lacquer as to hardness, durability, and lustre, is unparalleled, and secondly because the decorative genius of her artists has been exercised in this field with most conspicuous success and with marked independence of foreign influence. Certainly the lustre of Japanese lacquer appeals to the least educated eye, so much so that a box or tray of fine black lacquer without ornamentation of any sort possesses an indescribable charm, and tempts the spectator not merely to gaze at it, but also to feel and caress it. Durability and hardness, too, though they are not qualities that enter into a normal estimate of beauty, have much to do with the artistic developments of Japanese lacquer, for had it not possessed these attributes, it could never have been considered worthy of the magnificent and costly decoration lavished upon it. It resists the action of boiling liquids and of alcohol, so that a lacquered cup can be used for tea, for soup, for hot *sake*, and in fact for all table purposes, being in that respect equal to porcelain, while it is superior to porcelain in security against fracture and in non-conducting properties. There are now standing in the Tōkyō Museum of Arts specimens of lacquer which, having lain at the bottom of the sea for some years in a sunken steamer, were found, when recovered, to still retain much of their original beauty. And in the collections of Japanese connoisseurs there are numbers of lacquered objects many centuries old, which have withstood all

the effects of time, and are now as perfect as when they emerged from their makers' hands. This admirable durability, especially remarkable considering that the base used by the lacquerer is wood of exceeding thinness and frailty, must be attributed in part, of course, to the preservative properties of the lacquer varnish itself, but largely also to the skill of the experts by whom these fine specimens were produced.

Japan derived the art of lacquer manufacture from China. There can be no doubt of that. The tools used in both countries are almost identical and the methods have such a likeness that their common origin is unquestionable. But as the time of the art's introduction into Japan was pre-historical, the date cannot be fixed accurately. Certainly, however, it was not later than the beginning of the sixth century, and it will probably be right to conclude that, like many other products of civilisation, this also came in the train of Buddhism. At first the art does not seem to have extended beyond the manufacture of plain black lacquer, but antiquarians allege that from the early years of the eighth century ornamentation with dust of gold and mother-of-pearl began to be practised. There is a measure of conjecture in this statement, for the oldest specimens of artistic lacquer known to exist in Japan are two boxes, one of which was made to order of the celebrated priest Kuki, better known as Kōbō Daishi, at the close of the ninth century, for the purpose of containing the Shingon *Sutra* which he had conveyed from China, and the other is a receptacle for jewels believed to date from approximately the same period. Both objects are decorated after the manner called *maki-kin-iro;* that is to say, gold and silver dust hav-

ing been scattered over the surface of the lacquer, a design is added, and the whole is then delicately polished. The decorative motive of the *sutra*-case is a troop of *karyobin* (birds with angel's torsos) flying among flowers; that of the jewel-box is an elaborate floral diaper. In the former the artist carefully followed Chinese models; in the latter he partially obeyed the naturalistic tendency of Japanese genius. These works show too much technical skill to be attributed to the beginning of a period of art development, and it seems a reasonable inference that lacquers similarly decorated had been produced since an earlier era.

The tenth century saw a further extension of the range of motives: landscapes and religious scenes began to be included in the lacquerer's *repertoire*. It is on record that the Emperor Kwazan (985) executed with his own hand a design of *Hōrai-zan* (the mountain of elysium) on a lacquer writing-desk, and there are authenticated specimens of twelfth-century lacquer in which the decorative designs take the forms of a figure of Shaka among flowers and birds, of Arhats worshipping a dragon, of phœnixes, and even of human figures. From the eleventh century, also, the use of lacquer ceased to be limited to boxes, desks, and minor objects of furniture: it was applied to columns, beams, and other parts of the interiors of temples, and the processes hitherto adopted were supplemented by inlaying with mother-of-pearl and with gold. The decorative artist now quickly passed to elaborate and delicately executed landscapes as well as intricate and tasteful designs, which he was certainly able to depict with marked skill during the thirteenth century, if not during the twelfth. He further em-

ployed incrustation with gold foil, and some specimens dating from the Kamakura epoch show an affinity with the pictorial scrolls of the time, their decorative designs being chosen so as to illustrate verses of poetry traced in golden ideographs beside the picture. To the Kamakura era belongs also a new departure, namely, the application of vermilion lacquer to objects having their wooden surfaces carved in diapers or arabesques. This kind of work — called *Kamakura-bori* (Kamakura carving) — appears to have been suggested by the red lacquer of China which has designs cut in the lacquer itself. The *Kamakura-bori* belongs to a palpably inferior grade of work, but some interest attaches to it as it probably helped to suggest an important development with which the Ashikaga epoch is credited.

That development was the production of what is called *taka-makiye* (lacquer in relief). Hitherto artists had confined themselves to *hira-makiye* (flat lacquer), that is to say, lacquer having the decorative design in the same plane as the ground. The sole exception had been the *Kamakura-bori*, just spoken of, in which effects of relief were obtained by carving the wood to which the lacquer was applied. Now, however, experts undertook surface modelling in the lacquer itself. It is not possible to fix the exact date of this notable addition to the art, but it certainly reached a point of high development in the time of the *Shōgun* Yoshimasa (1449–1490). There has been frequent occasion to allude to Yoshimasa in these pages, and to the extraordinary impulse that all branches of art received from his establishment of the tea-clubs and from his munificent patronage. The *taka-makiye*, which from his era became famous, constitutes one of the distinc-

tive features of Japanese lacquer. It is not found in the lacquers of either China or Korea. With it, in that respect, may be classed aventurine lacquer, called "pear-ground" (*nashi-ji*) in Japan. This, too, has never been produced elsewhere. Briefly, *nashiji* may be described as a surface presenting the appearance of golden sand pervaded by a faint glow of russet brown. The gradual emergence of such a type from the gold dusted fields of earlier epochs is not difficult to conceive, but to the experts of Yoshimasa's era belongs the credit of having indicated the possibilities of this beautiful decoration.

No lacquerers prior to the days of Yoshimasa, that is to say, the second half of the fifteenth century, attained sufficient renown to be remembered by posterity. Then for the first time the annals speak of Hidetsugu of Nara, who constructed tea-boxes after designs by the celebrated *chajin* Jōo, and whose descendants continued to work through several generations; of Hadagoro of Kyōtō, whose lacquers were known as *Hokkai-nuri-mono* from the name of the locality where he resided; of Kōami Dōchō, who obtained designs from Tosa Mitsunobu, from Nōami and from Sōami, and who excelled in all the processes of flat lacquer as well as lacquer in relief, bequeathing his art to his descendants, of whom his great-grandson Sozen, the latter's son Sokei, and his grandson Sohaku were all famous lacquerers; of Kōami Dōsei, the second of the Kōami family; of Taiami and Seiami and of Igarashi Shinsai, who also founded a long line of skilled artists. It is plain that from the era of Yoshimasa — commonly spoken of in art circles as "Higashi-yama" — the expert lacquerer began to rank with the pictorial artist or the sculptor.

Until its closing years the sixteenth century showed no marked progress in the process of lacquer production, a fact doubtless attributable in the main to the exceedingly disturbed state of the Empire. But when the *Taikō* had restored peace, and had inaugurated the fashion of lavishing all the resources of applied art on the interior decoration of castles and temples, the services of the lacquerer were employed to an extent hitherto unknown, and there resulted some very fine work on friezes, coffered ceilings, door-panels, altar-pieces, and reliquaries. At first, when, tranquillity having been established, the lacquer experts returned to Kyōtō from their retreats in the provinces, specimens produced by them showed defects of technique, and came to be classed for that reason under the name of *Karasumaru-mono*, Karasumaru being the locality of their manufacture. But the rapidly growing demand for fine work in architectural decoration soon raised the standard of skill, and all the processes of the Higashi-yama era were employed with newly added graces of design and excellency of finish. Surviving specimens do not indicate that decoration in the *taka-makiye* style (relief) was largely practised. The taste of the time found more faithful expression in a new fashion introduced by Anami Kwōyetsu (1590–1637), of which the characteristic features were remarkable boldness of decorative design, free use of conventionalised forms, and the employment of gold, silver, lead, and mother-of-pearl in solid masses. This style received fuller development at the hands of Ogata Kwōrin, who is accounted one of the greatest decorative artists of the seventeenth century. It must be confessed, however, that the mannerisms of Kwōrin are not always pleasing. His conventionalisms sometimes

become so extreme as to lose suggestiveness, and the balance of his decorative scheme is disturbed by unduly large masses of metal or mother-of-pearl. When he avoids these faults his work deserves the admiration it received in his time, as well as the homage of a numerous school of imitators down to modern eras. Certainly prior to his epoch no expert of applied art had formed any comparable conception of the effect of skilful spacing and the charm of irregularly yet symmetrically distributed decoration. Yet, even in that respect, neither Kwōyetsu nor Kwōrin can be called an originator. The source from which they derived inspiration is easily discovered by any one examining the illuminated *sutras* of the twelfth century.

The Tokugawa times were the golden era of lacquer production. Not only did the universal popularity of the tea-clubs and the incense cult create a keen demand for the finest work, but also the interior decoration of the mausolea at Shiba and Nikko offered an unprecedented field for the art. In these mausolea are to be found the most splendid applications of lacquered decoration that the world has ever seen, nor is it at all likely that anything on a comparable scale of grandeur and beauty will ever again be produced. Japanese connoisseurs hold that the summit of development was reached at the end of the seventeenth century under the rule of the fifth *Shōgun*, Tsunayoshi (1680–1709), — that famous era of *Genroku*, memorable for so much that was bad and so much that was good in Japanese civilisation. Such was the reputation acquired by work of that time that whenever in later days a date had to be assigned to any specimen of exceptionally fine quality, the disposition of connoisseurs was to refer it to the

days of Jōken-in (the posthumous name of Tsunayoshi). It cannot be said, however, that the artists of the epoch had any new inspiration. With the exception of Ogawa Ritsuō, they merely carried the methods of their predecessors to the highest point of technical excellence and decorative refinement. Ritsuō, called also Haritsu, flourished during the first half of the eighteenth century. He followed the style of Kwōyetsu and Kwōrin in introducing masses of metal into his decorative schemes, but he added also ivory, and, above all, faience. It was for this last addition chiefly that he became famous, for although the idea of inlaying a lacquered surface with faience medallions sounds bizarre, the effect was unquestionably beautiful.

Many exquisite examples of lacquer are to be found in *inro* produced during the Tokugawa times. The *inro*, owing to its small size and comparative cheapness, has attracted the attention of foreign collectors, and numerous specimens of great beauty are among the treasures of European and American dilettanti. It shares with the *netsuke* the charm of offering an almost unlimited field of decorative motives, — landscapes copied from great painters, battle-scenes, incidents from daily life, from history and from mythology, birds and insects of every description, and innumerable studies of flowers and foliage. Almost all the renowned lacquerers from the sixteenth century downwards occupied themselves, occasionally, with the making of *inro*, but the artists of the Koma and Kajikawa families, through several generations, were especially connected with this class of work, and their signatures are found most frequently. Since, however, the *inro* is merely one of the objects

to which the lacquerer mainly devoted his attention, everything that has been said of his art applies to it, nor does it call for any separate discussion.

A frequently published assertion is that modern Japanese lacquerers are far inferior to their predecessors, and that nothing now produced will support comparison with the work of bygone times. That is an error. There has not been any loss of skill. Shibata Zeshin, who died in 1891, was, perhaps, as great an artist in lacquer as ever existed, and there are men living to-day who have all the skill of the best eras. The only change is in the conditions of production. Fine lacquer is exceedingly costly. It demands not only great outlay of expert toil, but also the use of very expensive materials. The Japanese art-artisan, however, is generally poor; or, at any rate, his circumstances are too humble to warrant the expenditure of large sums on specimens which have the less chance of finding a purchaser the higher their price. All the finest pieces of former times were produced to order, whereas at present few persons are disposed to give a commission, the tendency of those that can afford to possess rich lacquer being rather to seek old specimens of which the durability is already guaranteed, than to take the risk of having new made. But there has been abundant proof that the experts of the time can do quite as skilled work as any of their predecessors did.

In the manufacture of Japanese lacquer, three distinct processes have to be noted. The first is the extraction and preparation of the lac; the second, its application, and the third decoration of the lacquered surface.[1]

[1] See Appendix, note 59.

The lac is obtained from a variety of the sumach, called in Japan *urushi-no-ki* (*Rhus vernicifera*). A horizontal incision is made in the trunk of the tree, and in a few minutes this channel becomes filled with a greyish-white emulsion which, on exposure to the air, changes to light brown and ultimately to black. This juice may be taken from the tree at any time from April to October, but midsummer is the best season. The yield of one tree varies from twenty-seven to fifty-four grammes, and to obtain that quantity it is necessary to destroy the tree. It appears from official figures that at least a million trees must be sacrificed annually to the needs of the manufacturer, and readers will not be surprised to learn that of late years a demand has arisen for Chinese lac, which, since it can be sold in Japan at a lower price than that of the domestic product, is used for inferior classes of work. According to analyses made by Korschelt and Rein, the substance thus obtained from the lacquer-tree contains from 60 to 85 per cent of lac acid ($C_{14}H_{18}O_2$); from 3 to 6½ per cent of gum arabic; from 1.7 to 3.5 per cent of albumen; and from 10 to 34 per cent of water. To prepare it for use, it is first pressed through cotton-cloth to remove extraneous bodies, — as bits of bark, wood, etc.; it is then ground in a wooden tub for the purpose of crushing the grain and obtaining uniform liquidity; subsequently it is again strained, and finally the water it contains is expelled by exposure to the sun's rays or to artificial heat.[1] While the drying process is going on, various ingredients are added according to the kind of lacquer to be produced, — gamboge for *nashi-ji* (pear-ground) lacquer; perilla oil and plum-juice for

[1] See Appendix, note 60.

shunkei (reddish-yellow) lacquer; *yegoma* oil and cinnabar for *shu-uruishi* (red lacquer); acetous protoxide of iron for *ro-iro-urushi* (mirror-black lacquer); dust of gold or silver for *kin-iro* (golden) or *gin-iro* (silver) lacquer; and so on. The preparation of the lac up to this stage is the function of a special class of workmen, whose task ends when the liquid is ready for use.

Passing now to the duties of the *nuri-mono-shi*, or lacquerer, let it be supposed that the object to be lacquered is a box made of *hi-no-ki* (*Retinispora obtusa*), a white pine, which, owing to its fine grain and freedom from knots and resin, is considered specially suitable. The box having emerged from the hands of a skilled joiner, its walls are as thin as paper and its parts beautifully fitted. The lacquerer's first task is to apply a lute, called *kokuso*, which consists of rice-paste and lac mixed with fine cotton wadding. This he pastes with a pointed spatula over all lines of joining, wooden pin heads, knots, or other imperfections, having previously pared down these places with a knife. Next he spreads a thin coat of lac-sizing over the whole surface, the object being to solidify the latter by filling up the natural pores of the wood as well as all accidental fissures. Then follows another operation of luting, the putty used being compounded of ground pottery, rice-paste, and lacquer. Each of these processes is separated by an interval long enough to thoroughly dry the lacquer. After the second operation of luting, the surface is burnished to perfect smoothness by means of a special kind of sandstone. The next process is one of the most important. The whole object is covered with a layer of Japanese paper — the long-fibred variety known as *mino-gami* — or of

thin hempen cloth. To fix this covering, the surface is painted with a thin pulp of rice-paste and lacquer, and when the paper or cloth has been smoothly pressed into this adhesive bed, a thin coat of lacquer is applied. The danger of warping is thus effectually averted, and exudations from the wooden surface are prevented from reaching the ultimate coats of lacquer. The surface of the paper or cloth is then subjected to processes somewhat similar to those employed in the case of the wooden surface. First it is over-spread, once, twice, or even three times, with a putty of rice-paste, lacquer, and pottery-dust, each coat, when dry, being rubbed down with sandstone. Then another kind of pulp — differing from the last in the proportion of the ingredients and in the addition of pulverised ochre — is laid on, and carefully polished after drying. Next follows a light coating of pure lacquer, and then another application of "stiffening," the putty in this case consisting of pulverised ochre and lacquer with or without pottery dust. Indian ink is now rubbed into the surface by means of a ball of cotton, and thereafter black lacquer, specially prepared, is applied with a flat brush, the object being then carefully dried.[1] A very troublesome and tedious process ensues. It is that of "rubbing down." This is done with a special kind of fine-grained charcoal. Many days are devoted to the work, and the surface finally obtained is perfectly smooth, lustreless, dark grey, or greyish black. The preliminary operations are now completed, and the object is ready to receive whatever coats are destined to give it its final appearance.

The reader will observe that in this method of

[1] See Appendix, not 61.

preparation, the basic material disappears altogether from view, and the lacquerer ultimately works on a surface of paper or cloth. Such is not the invariable process, however. In two favourite varieties of lacquer — *kiji-nuri* and *shunkei-nuri* — the grain of the wood is shown, no veneer of paper or cloth being employed. To produce these the wood is first "consolidated" by a pore-filling paste; it is then covered with pure translucid lacquer and polished. Thereafter, in the case of the *shunkei-nuri*, a light coat of yellow dust is applied, omitted in the case of *kiji-nuri*. The latter presents the appearance of highly polished mahogany or rosewood; the former suggests maple.

An object which, by the various processes described above, has developed a perfectly smooth, lustreless, greyish-brown surface, is said to have reached the "medium" stage (*naka-nuri*). It may now be finished by the application of a single coat of lacquer, without any subsequent burnishing, the result being *nuri-tate*, the commonest kind of lacquer, so called because the striations (*tate*) produced by the strokes of the brush with which the last coat is applied, are clearly visible. It may here be stated that in fine lacquer no semblance of brush-marks should be perceptible.

When the artisan desires to produce a better class of lacquer than the *nuritate*, he has merely to expend more material and more labour: additional coats of lacquer and additional rubbing and polishing. All this is only a question of patience and manual dexterity. Indeed, Japanese lacquers may be conveniently divided into "artisan lacquers" and "art lacquers;" the former comprising all varieties that owe their beauty solely to the quality of the ground

lacquer; the latter, those distinguished by surface decoration. Of the former there are many kinds, from the monochromes — mirror-black, vermilion, cinnabar, and other hues of red, yellow, brown, and green — to grounds ornamented with dusting of gold, silver, mother-of-pearl, tin, or bronze; inlaid with mother-of-pearl; marbled; grained like wood, and so forth. Of the "art lacquers" also there are many kinds, but the distinguishing feature of all is that they have passed through the hands of the decorative artist, and by him have been ornamented with pictures which take them completely out of the rank of mere technical excellence.

It is not necessary to dwell upon "artisan lacquers." Some of them are very attractive, but, after all, they belong to the class of varnishes, and have little to do with applied art.

The artist by whom the decoration of art lacquer is undertaken has the name of *maki-ye-shi*, which signifies "an expert that strews pictures." This term is derived from the fact that strewing with dust of gold was the earliest method of lacquer decoration. At first the expert merely sprinkled gold powder sparsely over the surface, subsequently polishing the latter. Such lacquer was called *heijin*. The next stage of progress gave the *maki-kini-ro*, in which gold dust having been thickly strewn over a black field, a coating of translucid lac was superimposed, careful rubbing with charcoal and polishing being the final steps. Sometimes the gold dust was sifted so thickly that its particles lost their individuality, and a golden ground (*kin-ji*) resulted, showing soft lustre and a charming play of broken light. At a later era "pear-ground" (*nashi-ji*), or aventurine, was obtained by

strewing gold dust over a field of russet brown. The most highly esteemed variety of *nashi-ji* was termed *giyōbu-nashi-ji*, after the name of the artist (Giyōbu) who invented it at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In this variety the surface is evenly covered with tiny squares of gold-foil, laid one by one in their places, a work demanding infinite patience, accuracy, and delicacy of manipulation. The sense in which the term *makiye-shi* came to be applied to the decorator of art lacquer will be plain from these facts, indicating, as they do, that his task originally was limited to sifting gold dust over the lacquer.

It may be stated as an almost invariable rule that either *kin-nashi-ji*, *kin-ji*, or *giyōbu-nashi-ji* is found associated with the finest lacquer, whether it enters into the decorative scheme, or appears on the reverse of the object. A ground of golden wood-grain (*kin-moku-me*), which costs the artist much trouble and requires not less skill than the *giyōbu-nashi-ji*, ranks also among choice varieties of secondary decoration. But the most difficult task of the *makiye-shi* is, of course, the application of the decoration. The variety of motives is virtually unlimited, ranging from elaborate landscapes, sea-scapes, battle-scenes, figure subjects, flowers, foliage, birds, insects, fish, and animals, to formal designs of scrolls, arabesques, and diapers. His palette includes several colours, — red, green, blue, silver, and gold being the principal, — but in all fine lacquers gold predominates so largely that the general impression conveyed by the object is one of glow and richness. Not infrequently the most elaborate part of the decoration is found on some comparatively inconspicuous part of the object. This is especially true of letter-boxes (*bunko*) and writing-

boxes (*suzuri-bako*), which with book-stands (*shodana*) and medicine-boxes (*inro*) have in all ages been considered deserving of the *makiye-shi's* highest skill. Thus it often happens that the decoration on the outside of a *bunko* or a *suzuri-bako* is not nearly so rich and elaborate as that on the inside of the lid. At first sight such a distribution of skill seems a mere caprice of luxury; but the logic of the decoration becomes evident by reflecting that when these boxes are in use, the lids are always removed and placed with their faces downwards on the mats, so that the decoration on the reverse side is chiefly seen. Nevertheless it is an inviolable rule that every part of a fine lacquer object must show beautiful and highly finished work, whether it be an external or an internal part.

As for the process of applying a decorative design, the object first receives all the treatment, as already described, necessary to produce a perfectly finished ground, and upon the latter the *makiye-shi* sketches the design, working with fine brushes and a paste of white lead. Having thus obtained an outline drawing, he fills in the details with gold and colours, superposes a coat of translucid lacquer, and finally subjects the whole to careful polishing. If parts of the design are to be in relief (*taka-makiye*), a putty is used for foundation. It consists of black-lacquer, white lead, camphor, and lampblack, and after being laid on the surface of the object, it receives the necessary modelling, is polished with charcoal, and thus enters into the field for the decorative scheme. No special difficulty attends the *taka-makiye* process, and the results produced are wonderfully rich and effective. Many connoisseurs, however, will find at least equal beauty in fine

examples of *hira-makiye* (flat *makiye*), especially those distinguished as *togi-dashi;* that is to say, pieces where the pictorial design is brought out by repeated processes of rubbing, so that all outlines disappear, and the decoration seems to float in a field of semi-translucid lacquer. When masses of metal or ivory enter into the decorative scheme, they have to be chiselled independently and afterwards embedded in the lacquer. The same is true in a modified degree of mother-of-pearl, though fragments are used to build up designs with the aid of paste in a manner not possible where metals are employed. The fashion of mother-of-pearl mosaics was inspired from China, and some work of that class shows almost incredible microscopic accuracy. A majority of the lacquers manufactured in modern times for the foreign market have mother-of-pearl (from the shell of the *haliotis*) and ivory in the decorative scheme. That style was brought into vogue by Shibayama Doshō in the second half of the eighteenth century. He cannot be said to have invented it, but, as has been observed of many other Japanese applied arts, the perfecting of the method was mistaken for its origin. It would be impossible to overstate the richness and decorative magnificence of many objects manufactured in modern workshops by combining lacquer grounds with elaborately constructed designs in mother-of-pearl, ivory, faience, gold, and silver. Screens, cabinets, boxes, and plaques in this fashion have been sent abroad in great numbers during the past thirty years, and now embellish many Western salons. But they have few attractions for Japanese connoisseurs, being, in fact, a product of foreign demand. In the works of Kwō-yetsu, Kwōrino, and Ritsuō some virility and chasteness

of taste always save the decoration from becoming meretricious. Shibayama himself was not unfaithful to true canons. But the later disciples of his school fall perpetually into the error of imagining that the chief ends to be attained are profusion of detail, an infinite display of manual dexterity, and brilliant wealth of material. The merit of magnificence cannot be denied to their works, but they can scarcely be called art lacquer.

There are some special varieties of lacquer which are too interesting to be left unnoticed. Two, well known to all collectors, are *tsui-koku* and *tsui-shu*. Both are similarly produced. The ground having been duly prepared in the orthodox method, coats of cinnabar and dark-brown lacquer are applied successively until a considerable thickness has been obtained, and then, while the lacquer is still soft, designs are cut into it, the channels made by the chisel being V-shaped, so that their sloping sides afford a plain view of the alternating layers of red and dark-brown lacquer. When the ultimate layer is dark-brown, the term *tsui-koku* is applied; when red, the term *tsui-shu*. Such works belong obviously to what are here classed as "artisan lacquers." Another variety of *tsui-shu* has a ground of incised arabesques or diapers, supporting a deeply chiselled decorative design of flowers, foliage, birds, insects, landscapes, etc. In such work the lacquer is not applied in alternating layers of red and black; it is usually pure red. Japanese artists have never been remarkable for successful production of this last variety of *tsui-shu*. The lac of China lends itself better to such purposes, and the choicest specimens are Chinese.[1]

[1] See Appendix, note 62.

Two other very attractive kinds of lacquer, though they do not belong to the artistic class, are called *Tsugaru-nuri* and *Wakasa-nuri*, names derived from the districts (Tsugaru and Wakasa) where they are produced. These lacquers are not of the *makiye* kind. The decorative design, in which several colours appear, presents an appearance of marbling or leaf-pattern, sometimes, however, being in regular stripes, and sometimes in an apparently fortuitous *mēlange* of clouding and spotting. It has been supposed that the Tsugaru and Wakasa patterns are manufactured by pressing leaves or twigs of plants into the soft surface of the lacquer and removing them when the latter is dry, various processes of coating and polishing being subsequently applied to the ground thus obtained. But though that method is adopted in some instances, the general plan is to spread upon a *naka-nuri* base a pattern of putty, over which coats of coloured lacquer are laid—black, yellow, red, and green in the case of *Tsugaru-nuri*, with addition of golden yellow, orange and brown for *Wakasa-nuri*,—the whole being then covered with translucid lac, and finally polished in the usual way. Like the "transmutation glazes" of Chinese porcelain, the disposition of the colours on these curious lacquers is in a measure accidental, for the salience of any part of the design determines the amount of friction to which it must be subjected before reduction to a plane surface, and consequently determines also the colour that emerges from the superincumbent layers. Cognate with these lacquers is the so-called "tortoise-shell," known in Japan as "rubbed off lacquer" (*suri-hagashi-nuri*), which need not be described further than to say that the upper coat of black or amber-brown lacquer

is polished away in places so as to expose the under coat of vermilion red. There is also a variety called *chinkin-bori*, of which, as its name implies, the distinguishing feature is that a design—generally of arabesques or scrolls — is scratched upon black lacquer, and gold-foil is then rubbed into the lines. This is a subsidiary decoration seldom seen in combination with fine work. "Shark-skin lacquer" (*same-gawa-nuri*) is another kind which used to be greatly employed for covering the sheaths of swords. It is obtained by pressing shark-skin into the ground of the article to be lacquered, a layer of rice-paste having previously been spread over the surface. The skin is then filed down to an even plane, and a coating of lacquer is superposed, with the usual polishing and rubbing. There results a black surface covered regularly with small white circles.

M. Louis Gonse says, and Mr. E. Gilbertson endorses his dictum as "a simple truth," that "Japanese lacquered objects are the most perfect works that have issued from man's hands."

NAMES AND ERAS OF CELEBRATED LACQUER EXPERTS

Hidetsugu, of Nara. Second half of fifteenth century.

Hadagoro, of Kyōtō. Second half of fifteenth century. His works are known as "Hokkai-nuri-mono."

Taiami, of Kyōtō. Time of Ashikaga Yoshimasa. Celebrated for *togi-dashi* and *taka-makiye* (which he is said to have invented). He founded a long line of expert lacquerers.

Kōami Choan (1560–1603), eighth representative of the Kōami family.

Anami Kwōyetsu (1590–1637). A celebrated artist; introducer of the style afterwards carried to perfection by Kwōrin.

Ogata Kwōrin, a renowned lacquerer and painter of the seventeenth century (died 1716), remarkable for the bold freedom of his style.

Yoji Hidetsugu (called also Noji Zenkyō), second half of sixteenth century.

Seiami (called also Shōho), second half of sixteenth century.

Kōami Sozen, grandson of Kōami Dochō.

Kōami Sokei, son of Kōami Sozen.

Kōami Sohaku, son of Kōami Sokei.

Kōami Dōsei, son of Kōami Dochō.

Igarashi Shinsei, a celebrated lacquerer patronised by the *Shōgun* Yoshimasa (second half of fifteenth century). Many of his descendants became famous.

Kōami Chōho, worked under patronage of Iyeyasu in Yedo (beginning of seventeenth century).

Koma Kiui, worked for Iyemitsu in Yedo (first half of seventeenth century). Eleven generations of the Koma family worked for the Tokugawa.

Kōami Nagashige, tenth generation of the Kōami family. A celebrated expert who worked mainly for the Tokugawa *Shōguns* in Yedo (1620–1651), as did also his descendants through nine generations.

Kōami Nagafusa, son of Kōami Nagashige.

Kōami Chokyu, son of Kōami Nagafusa.

Kōami Masamine, son of Kōami Chōkyu, beginning of seventeenth century.

Igarashi Dōho, worked in Kaga.

Yamamoto Shōbei, worked in Nagoya; end of eighteenth century.

Yamamoto Shunshō, worked in Kyōtō (died 1682).

Shunshō, name by nine descendants of Yamamoto Shunshō, who were all lacquer experts.

Shibara Ichidayu, worked in Kaga (middle of seventeenth century).

Koma Kiuhaku, son of Koma Kiui (end of seventeenth century). Eleven generations of the Koma family worked for the Tokugawa Shōguns in Yedo.

Tatsuki Chōbei, worked in Kyōtō in second half of seventeenth century, and became very renowned.

Kajikawa Kaijiro (1661–1684), a celebrated lacquerer of Yedo; had the art title of *tenka-ichi.* His descendants continued to work for several generations.

Seigai Kanshichi (1680–1710), celebrated for designs of waves: hence his name *seigai* (the blue sea).

Ogawa Ritsuō, called also Haritsu. Worked in Yedo and died in 1747. Celebrated for using faience in the decoration of lacquer.

Shōami Masanari, worked in Kyōtō (1716–1740); celebrated for *togi-dashi.*

Nagata Tomoharu (1720–1750), an expert of the Kwōrin school.

Yamamoto Rihei (1735–1766), worked in Kyōtō.

Izuka Tōyō, called also Kwan Shōsai; worked in Awa (1760–1780). Made *inro* only, for which he was very famous.

Ninomiya Tōtei (1790-1820), worked in Yedo, and was specially skilled in producing *chinkin-bori.* He used the teeth of rats for engraving designs of peonies, flowers, and foliage.

Koma Kansai (1800–1845), pupil of Koma Kiuhaku, fifth representative of the Koma family, received permission to take the family name in consideration of his skill. He worked in Yedo and among his pupils was the celebrated Shibata Zeshin.

Shibata Zeshin (1835–1891), the most celebrated of modern lacquer experts. Worked in Yedo and followed the style of Kwōrin. Pupil of Koma Kwansai.

Tamakaji Zokoku (1830–1870); worked at Takamatsu in Senuki. He is celebrated for a style of lacquer called after him (*Zokoku-nuri*), which was obtained by carving designs in bamboo or wood and filling the lines with red, yellow, and blue lacquer.

Hara Yōyusai, called also Kōzan (1804–1840). Worked in Yedo and attained high renown.

Nakayama Kōmin (1840–1871), pupil of Yōyusai. Worked in Yedo.

Ogawa Shōmin (still living). A pupil of Nakayama Komin. Works in Tōkyō.

Hanzan (1743–1790), pupil of Haritsu (Ogawa Ritsuō). Worked in Yedo and adopted the style of his master.

Yōsei; a contemporary of Hanzan, and a follower of Ritsuō's style.

Chōhei (first part of nineteenth century). School of Ritsuō. Worked in Yedo.

Kakōsai, pupil of Izuka Tōyō.

Shōkwasai, a fellow-worker with Shibayama Doshō in Yedo.

Shibayama Doshō (second half of eighteenth century). Worked in Yedo and is celebrated for his success in introducing ivory into the decoration of lacquered objects.

Jōkasai (first part of nineteenth century); worked in Yedo.

Shirayama Shōya (still living).

Kawanobe Itcho (still living).

Uyematsu Hōmin (still living).

Appendix

Appendix

NOTE 1.—*Lit.*, a "placed thing;" that is to say, an object of art, such as a vase or statue, serving merely for ornamental purposes.

NOTE 2. — Pronounced "Go Dashi," according to the Japanese sound of the same characters.

NOTE 3.—The greatest of these men whose names are household words in Japan, were Li Lung-yen (Japanese Ri Riumin), Ma Yuen (Japanese Bayen), Muh Ki (Japanese Mokkei), Hia Kwei (Japanese Ka-Kei), and Ngan Hwai (Japanese Ganki).

NOTE 4. — For detailed lists of Chinese artists of the Yuan (1260–1367), *Min* (1368–1646), and later eras the reader is recommended to consult Dr. Anderson's "Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum."

NOTE 5. — The prelate Kukai is recorded to have carried from China in the year 806 no less than thirty-six paintings of supernatural scenes as well as portraits of patriarchs, and other priests enriched their country to an almost equal extent in the same century.

NOTE 6. — Every collector knows these *maki-mono*, or pictorial scrolls. Sometimes the long series of pictures told their own tale, but generally the drawings served only to illustrate a chapter of history or legend written in their intervals or on their margins.

NOTE 7. — It will be observed that this record assigns to wood-engraving in Japan an antiquity nearly six hundred years greater than that attributable to the beginning of the art in Europe.

NOTE 8. — Dr. Anderson assigns 1700 as the time when colour-printing began in Japan, and Mr. S. Tuke has fixed the date at 1710. But the most exhaustive researches assign it to about 1740.

NOTE 9. — Literally "brocade picture," but the term *nishiki* (brocade) had long been used in Japan in the sense simply of "many-coloured." Another term originally applied to these pictures was *suri-mono* (print), but the name subsequently came to designate little single-sheet chromo-xylographs which were sent to friends at the New Year, and also black-and-white prints. Sheets in sequence — two, three, five, seven, or even twelve — which were first introduced by

Torii Kiyonaga in 1775, are called *tsuzuki-mono*. Of nearly contemporaneous origin was the *hashira-kakushi-ye* (post-concealing picture), a long narrow chromo-xylograph; and to Katsukawa Shunsho (1789) is due the *hoso-ye* (slender picture), which often shows remarkably clever examples of designing.

NOTE 10. — Practically all knowledge hitherto collected of the sepulchral relics of Japan is due to the patient and scientific researches of Mr. W. Gowland, and to those of the late Baron Kanda and Professor Tsuboi of the Imperial Japanese University.

NOTE 11. — Similar moulds exist in Korea, a fact which helps to establish the theory of an industrial connection between Japan and that part of the Asiatic continent in early ages.

NOTE 12. — It is noteworthy that the mirrors of the ancient Greeks were exactly similar to those of China and Japan, with the exceptions that the Greeks did not use quicksilver and that their decorative designs were engraved.

NOTE 13. — It is interesting to compare these facts with the historical records on which the Japanese themselves have hitherto been accustomed to rely. Their oldest tradition tells that the Sun Goddess gave a mirror to her grandchild, bidding him worship it as her invisible soul no less fervently than he had previously worshipped her visible presence. There is not any serious attempt to state arithmetically the time when that event occurred, but it necessarily antedates the era of Japan's terrestrial sovereigns, and must therefore be referred to the seventh or eighth century before Christ. Yet Japanese archæologists speak of the art of metal casting as having been acquired from Korea in the first century before the Christian era, and even record the names of two Korean experts — Mai Jun and Sho Toku-haku — who came to Japan to teach the process. In other words, they represent the first exercise of the art as having taken place six or seven hundred years after its products had come into actual use. There is not any irreconcilable contradiction, of course. The Japanese historian may maintain that the mirror had been in his countrymen's possession and had been regarded by them as a rare and wonderful object, long before they understood the processes of its manufacture. But, as a matter of fact, he does not appear to have yet noticed the discrepancy between attested facts and the statements he advances.

NOTE 14. — Indra and Brama are generally coloured red and green, respectively.

NOTE 15. — It is significant that painting also was not applied to purposes of portraiture in Japan. A few artists made portraits of themselves, but the professional portrait-painter had no existence.

NOTE 16. — These *zushi* have been carried away in great numbers to form articles of decorative furniture in foreign houses, for which purpose they are now expressly manufactured. It is a fancy which to Japanese eyes appears as incongruous as the use of á reredos for an over-mantle or of a monstrance for an epergne would seem to Occidentals.

NOTE 17. — Gowland, in the "Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry," Vol. XIII.

NOTE 18. — A vase, a censer, and a pricket-candlestick formed a set, and were collectively called *mitsu-gusoku*, or "the three articles of furniture."

NOTE 19. — The credit of this success belongs to Signor Ragusa.

NOTE 20. — The method of applying the gold was to "lay it thickly over varnish composed of hone-powder and lacquer upon hempen cloth." (Satow.)

NOTE 21. — *Shitan* is a favourite wood in China and Japan. It is the material used by the Chinese for making reading-desks, book-cases, vase-stands, and many other objects of furniture or decoration. In its natural state its colour is red, but before it emerges from the workman's hands it is stained black, and under the friction of use it develops a beautiful glossy surface. It is hard, close-grained, and almost knotless, being thus specially adapted for carving.

NOTE 22. — This device has been utilised in recent years for making metal (silver or *shibuichi*) cases to contain match-boxes.

NOTE 23. — From about the year 1830 the use of huge tobacco-pouches obtained much vogue among the artisan classes. Generally these pouches had silver chains for attaching the *netsuke*, which was of the button (*manju*) variety and proportionately large. Sometimes the silver chains numbered as many as fifty, and to such an extent was this extravagance carried that a man wearing clothes worth ten *yen* would have a tobacco-pouch worth one hundred *yen*.

NOTE 24. — In families whose ancestors had the honour of serving the Tokugawa Court, there are preserved and treasured long rolls of brocade consisting entirely of tobacco-pouch covers sewed together. These serve primarily to illustrate the extraordinary variety and beauty of the stuffs used for covering pouches, and incidentally to record the long service of the families possessing them, for each pouch was a New Year's gift from the *Shōgun*.

NOTE 25. — The *shima-dai* itself is generally of pure white-pine, and the trees, crane, and tortoise which it supports are of silver and gold; but the figures of the old man and the old woman are invariably wood-carvings.

NOTE 26. — Such chiselling was called *itto-bori*, or "single-stroke carving."

NOTE 27. — Manufacturers of all small wooden objects were generically called *himono-shi*.

NOTE 28. — From the close of the seventeenth century, worshippers at the shrines of Sugi-no-Mori Jinja in Yedo fell into the habit of presenting an image of clay or wood on the occasion of making a vow or returning thanks to the deity. There were eight houses where these images were manufactured, and where, also, the puppets used in festival processions were modelled, the material employed for the latter being usually a variety of paper called *mino-gami*, which can be worked up to the consistency and strength of planking. The nature of these puppets will be apparent from the fact that the most remarkable among them were the *Denshichi-migyo* which had movable eyes. They derived their name from that of their maker, Takeoka Denkichi, who, in 1873, constructed with *mino-gami* an exact copy of the Kamakura *Dai-Butsu* for the Vienna Exhibition. The Takeoka family, now represented by Takeoka Gohei, were inspired by the example of Matsumoto Kisaburo to effect great improvements in the manufacture of these puppets.

NOTE 29. — This has been demonstrated by experiments conducted in Yezo by Professor H. S. Munroe, an American mining-engineer.

NOTE 30. — Reference may be made to two huge carp, about nine feet in height, which stand at either extremity of the roof-ridge of Nagoya Castle. According to popular belief they are made of pure gold, but they are in fact copper plated with the precious metal.

NOTE 31. — The gilding process is thus described by Mr. W. Gowland, formerly Assayer at the Imperial Japanese Mint, in one of a series of valuable essays read before the Society of Chemical Industry: "The object of copper or bronze to be gilded was immersed in vinegar made from the juice of unripe plums until a clean metallic surface was obtained. It was then washed with water and dried over a brazier, and mercury was applied to it while it was still warm. When the surface had thus been amalgamated, the gold was laid upon it in the form of leaves. A stronger heat was then applied, the mercury was volatilised, and the gold left perfectly adherent." Japanese accounts add that *tonoko* (freestone powder) was mixed with the mercury for application to the surface of the metal; that the process of plating was repeated two, three, and even four times, and that polishing with *tonoko* was finally resorted to. They also mention another method: the metal, having been boiled in lye,

was carefully polished, first with charcoal and afterwards with emery powder, a brush of split bamboo (called *sasara*) being employed for the purpose. It was then immersed in plum-juice, afterwards covered with a mixture of mercury and gold-dust, and finally heated to volatilise the mercury. Polishing by friction with steel needles, and, if necessary, "colour-finishing" (*iroage*) were the final processes. These descriptions apply to silver plating also.

NOTE 32.—This statement indicates that refining processes of great efficiency were adopted in Japan. That is the case; and considerable interest attaches to the fact, for these processes seem to have been devised, in great part, by the Japanese themselves. Mr. W. Gowland says: "When gold was found to contain an undue proportion of silver, it was submitted to a curious process for the separation of the latter metal. It was first reduced to a coarse powder by heating it to near its melting-point and then rubbing it on an iron plate with a stone or iron rubber. The coarsely powdered gold was then mixed with common salt, and a certain proportion of clay, and piled up in the form of a cone on an earthen dish. The whole was then placed in a furnace containing charcoal fuel, and was kept at a red heat for at least twelve hours, by which means the silver was converted into chloride. The dish with its contents was then removed, washed with hot brine and water, the silver chloride was dissolved, and the gold left in a purified state." The test for silver was made with the touchstone, but the test for copper was effected by a method "unique in assaying operations." The metal was heated to redness over a charcoal fire, and when at the proper temperature, was rubbed with a stick of *hinoki* (the wood of the *Thaya obtusa*) and then immersed in water. The presence of copper and its approximate amount were determined by the colour and appearance presented by the part to which the stick of wood had been applied. So successful were the old operators in the application of this test that it is rare to find more than 0.25 to 0.35 per cent of copper in the old gold coins. If the test showed an excess of copper, it was removed by cupellation with lead.

NOTE 33.—In the case of gold this was effected by painting the object with a mixture of iron sulphate, copper sulphate, potassium nitrate, calcined sodium, chloride and resin, made into a paste with water. It was then carefully heated on a grating over a charcoal fire, subsequently immersed in a solution of common salt and then washed with water, the silver being dissolved out of the upper layer of the alloy and a surface of pure gold left (Gowland). In practice, the *kinzokushi* obtained his nitrate of potash by using gunpowder. In the case of silver, the following interesting account is given by Mr.

Gowland: "When bars of debased silver (*i.e.* silver containing undue proportions of copper) were cast, a practice which unfortunately was not seldom followed, even in the old mints — especially for commercial bars — if the military rulers of the country were in need of money, a special mode of procedure was adopted. The silver was poured into canvas moulds, which were set in troughs of hot water, the reason for this being that the alloy contained so much copper that, if cast in the ordinary way, the bars would be coated with a black layer of oxide from the action of oxygen of the air on the copper, and this was difficult to remove. By placing the moulds under water this oxidation was prevented, and castings with a clear metallic surface were obtained. The bars were, however, of a coppery hue, and this required removal. They were therefore heated to redness over a charcoal fire, and then plunged into vinegar — made from the juice of unripe plums — containing common salt in solution. After digestion in this for some hours, they were washed with water and then boiled in plum vinegar without salt for one or more hours, when they were washed with boiling water and dried. By these operations the copper in the alloy was removed from the surface layers and a coating of pure silver left."

NOTE 34. — Professor Rein, in his great work "The Industries of Japan," describes the method adopted by the celebrated artist Gorosaburo of Kyōtō to produce a dark coffee-brown patina on copper and bronze: "Equal weights of green vitriol, copper vitriol, and sulphur are mixed with water. The copper article is then dipped in this bath, which must be often stirred on account of the finely distributed sulphur, and then rinsed in a second bath prepared in the same way but very much thinner. This process is repeated until the necessary corrosion is recognised by long practice. The vessel is then brought to the brazier and heated on an iron grate, whose bars are from eight to twelve centimeters distant from each other, and with frequent turning. In order not to endanger the soldering, these bars are sprinkled from time to time with water in which kariyasu (*Calamagrostis hakonesis*) has been boiled. The vessel is now rubbed with a cloth; then painted lightly with lacquer, rubbed again with the cloth, painted once more, and now heated until the sprinkled kariyasu water, rolling away in balls, indicates the amount of heat. The copper article is then taken from the grate with a pair of tongs and coated with a mixture of raw lac and lamp-black. It is then heated again up to the point where the water rolls away in balls, brushed over and painted anew with the lac mixture, and so on, till colour and lustre have the desired shade, whereupon the work is finished and the article is set aside for a second cooling."

NOTE 35. — In *hon-zōgan*, or true inlaying, a distinction is made between *hira-zōgan* (flat inlaying), where the inlaying is level with the surface of the field, and *takā-zōgan* (relief inlaying), where the outlines of the inlaid design are in slight relief.

NOTE 36. — M. Gonse, in *L'Art Japonais*, dismisses the Goto family in a single paragraph, and sums up their style thus: *Leurs décors sont monotones poncifs et d'un goût un peu chinois; leur invention est pauvre.*

NOTE 37. — There are some misapprehensions among European collectors with regard to this part of the subject. Errors of date are seldom of much importance in such matters, but occasionally they are worth noticing when they affect the history of the art's development. Thus M. Gonse depicts, among the oldest guards to which he refers, one by Toshiharu (of Yedo), and assigns it to the end of the fifteenth century. But Toshiharu was one of the "Three Masters" of the Nara family, and worked in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Again, M. Gonse puts Kaneiye at the close of the fourteenth century, whereas he flourished a hundred years later. He also shows a guard by Nagayoshi (of Yamashiro) — "incrusted with bronze and gold of different tones," having a design of monkeys and a vase of flowers — which, according to M. Gonse, shows plain evidence of Persian influence, and in that context the French critic explains that *Namban-tetsu* means "iron of Persia." Now this guard belongs to a comparatively modern class known in Japan as *Heian-tsuba* (guards of Heian), and justly condemned as most inferior specimens. They have no connection with any chapter of the art's history, but simply represent bad, vulgar workmanship. The design is borrowed from a Chinese picture. As for the term *Namban-tetsu*, it has nothing whatever to do with Persia, but was formerly applied to all iron imported from Occidental countries. The guard referred to by M. Gonse bears the date "1498," but that seems to be a capricious addition on the part of the maker. He might with equal truth have written "1948." Further, speaking of the use of translucid enamels in the decoration of sword-furniture, the same author accredits the innovation to Kunishiro, whom he places at the end of the sixteenth century. Kunishiro was an insignificant workman of the eighteenth century. There is no record of his having employed vitrifiable enamels for such a purpose, and if he did, he had been long anticipated by the Hirata family. M. Gonse also makes Kinai of Yechizen a contemporary of Nobuiye, and puts them both at the end of the sixteenth century. But Nobuiye flourished in the first part of that century, and the great Kinai in the second half of the seventeenth. These comments are made simply in the interests of

accuracy, and not with any intention of criticising an author whose knowledge, considering the circumstances under which it was acquired, must be pronounced remarkable, and who has brought so much light to bear on every branch of Japanese art.

NOTE 38. — Runinaga and Yoshishige are described by tradition as the first really skilled artists of Kaga. Their personal names were respectively Jiro and Goro, and their carvings were known as *Jiro-saku* and *Goro-saku*.

NOTE 39. — A *kozuka* by Toshihisa was sold fifty years ago for a sum which would now represent 1200 *yen*. It was made of iron, and the design, chiselled in high relief, represented the Chinese celebrities Liu Pei, Chu Koh-liang, and Kwan Yu.

NOTE 40. — Not to be confounded with the Okamoto family of Kyōtō, founded by Harukuni in 1740, the second representative of which is the celebrated Naoshige, known in the art world as "Tetsugen."

NOTE 41. — The meagre nature of the information contained in Japanese records with regard to the Kinai experts is remarkable. They are spoken of merely as "Kinai," neither their family names nor their dates being given. The writer of these notes caused special investigations to be made in Yechizen, and found that the first Kinai was called Ishikawa, the second Takahashi, and that the family was a branch of the Miyōchin. The tomb of Ishikawa Kinai shows that he died in 1680, and that of Takahashi Kinai, that he died in 1696. There is in Yechizen a tradition that the feudal chief of the province ordered the second Kinai to carve a pair of iron *menuki* in the shape of mandarin ducks. Kinai did not complete the work until three years had passed, and, almost immediately afterwards, one of the *menuki* was lost during the chief's journey to Yedo. Kinai, being required to replace the missing *menuki*, chiselled a substitute in one day, and was then severely rebuked for having previously taken three years to accomplish a work which could easily have been finished in as many days. His answer was: "Put those two *menuki* in water and observe the difference." That being done, the new *menuki* sank at once, but the original one floated, so delicately had it been chiselled.

NOTE 42. —It has been found by measurement that lines cut in guards of iron *shakudo*, etc., have a width not exceeding 3/100 of an inch. The tool used for such work is scarcely imaginable.

NOTE 43. — Yoshitsugu's personal name was Kichiji, and he received the appellation of "Kichiji Kinai" from contemporary connoisseurs, who placed him on the same level as the great Kinai.

NOTE 44. — Not to be confounded with Masu-ya. There were

four well-known experts whose ateliers went by the name of Masu-ya. They were, Uyemura Kuninaga (1680), of Kyōtō, known as "Masu-ya Kuhei;" Uyemura Kichibei, of Kyōtō, known as "Masu-ya Kichibei;" Torii Jōkwo, of Ōsaka, known as Masu-ya Uhei; and Uyemura Munemine (1720), or Masu-ya Kihei.

NOTE 45. — Miidera is the name of a famous temple on the shore of Lake Biwa in Omi. An autumn evening on the lake while the bell of the temple tolls is one of the "Eight Views" of Omi.

NOTE 46. — One of Jōi's guards (*shakudo*) carries the picture known as *Munetsuga no Matsu*. On the face, Yoshitsune, in full armour, rides to his final victory over the Taira; on the reverse, a troop of armed men with halberds and banners, appear partially above the rim of the guard so as to suggest distance and numbers. This guard was sold forty years ago to a Japanese provincial magnate for the equivalent of about 500 *yen* in the currency of the present time.

NOTE 47. — The attention of collectors should be drawn to one point connected with the Hamano experts. It is that among the eleven art names used by Shōzui, four (*Otsuriuken*, *Miboku*, *Rifudo*, and *Kankyo*) appear upon the works of Masanobu, and two (*Otsuriuken* and *Miboku*) upon the works of Norinobu. Thus a specimen cannot be exactly identified merely because it bears one or more of these names. Another point is that Masayoshi, a pupil of Shōzui, was called "Shōzui Bozu" (old man Shōzui), and being exceptionally skilful as an imitator of old masterpieces, did not hesitate to copy the works of his teacher and to mark them *Shōzui*.

NOTE 48. — These details were first published by Mr. W. Gowland.

NOTE 49. — It is related of Hidari Jingoro that when a friend recommended him to exercise more caution with the view of emerging from a condition of extreme poverty, he replied, "Pleasure lies hidden in poverty. Does not the plum blossom in snow?"

NOTE 50. — This was called *nata-gake*, *nata* being the term for hatchet.

NOTE 51. — Round the four sides of a Japanese chamber, at a height of six feet, runs a horizontal beam of finely grained knotless timber, nailed at intervals to similar vertical beams. The beauty of the timber being a cardinal feature, it is necessary to conceal the nail-heads. That is effected by fastening over them pieces of metal chiselled in various shapes and designs.

NOTE 52. — The mirror is said to have belonged to the Emperor Shomu.

NOTE 53. — Mr. Bowes maintained his views with remarkable firmness. No Japanese collection, public or private, contained any

specimen of the wares which he supposed to have been produced and preserved in temples and noblemen's residence during nearly three centuries. No Japanese connoisseur had any knowledge of such objects having been manufactured previously to 1837. All the circumstances under which their production had commenced at the latter date, were well known and had been officially recorded. The artisan who had originated the work was living and had received a reward from the Government for his invention. Some of the specimens which Mr. Bowes attributed to the seventeenth century were unhesitatingly identified by artisans of the present time as their own work, and the signatures which certain of these specimens bore were claimed by the men who had actually signed them. But none of these things shook Mr. Bowes' faith. He thought that he could detect in the wares themselves technical evidence, or signs of wear and tear, justifying his theory, and he clung to that theory with a tenacity which, considering the testimony on the other side, is probably unique.

NOTE 54. — A possible exception is a *Koto* (musical instrument) said to have belonged to the poet Chōmei in the twelfth century. It has mosaics of *cloisonnē* enamel on the face and sides.

NOTE 55. — Kaji supposed that the specimen was Dutch. There can be little doubt that it was a Chinese enamel imported by the Dutch at Nagasaki.

NOTE 56. — It will be at once understood that such a method, to be successful, implies great command of coloured pastes. Indeed, no feature of enamel manufacture is more conspicuous than the progress made by the Japanese in that respect during the past twenty years (1880–1900), and much of it is due to the assistance of a profoundly skilled German expert, the late Dr. Waagener.

NOTE 57. — It is a mere accident that the representatives of the Kyōtō and Tōkyō schools are both called Namikawa. There is no relationship. Moreover, the Kyōtō Namikawa is himself an expert of the highest skill; the Tōkyō Namikawa is only an enterprising and resourceful employer of experts.

NOTE 58. — In connection with the question of technical processes a fact of some interest may be mentioned. Up to the year 1890 the *cloisons* were attached to the base with solder which, when repeatedly exposed to the heat of the furnace, showed a tendency to "boil," thus causing holes in the enamel. Hence it often happened that vases or plaques upon which great labour had been expended, were found to be disfigured by pittings and scars when they finally emerged from the fire. These defects were usually hidden with wax, the result being that a specimen showing a glossy uniform surface at the

time of purchase, was subsequently found to lose its lustre and develop unaccountable blemishes. From 1890, when the choicest kinds of enamels began to be manufactured, a glue obtained from the root of the orchid (*ran*) was substituted for brass solder, the danger of flaws being thus avoided at some expense of durability.

NOTE 59. — The most scientific and exhaustive information with respect to lacquer manufacture is to be found in the "Industries of Japan" by Professor Rein, who studied the processes by engaging in them with his own hands. The practical experience he thus gained, supplemented by scientific knowledge, enabled him to publish the first really satisfactory monograph, to which free recourse has been made for the details here given.

NOTE 60. — The process of evaporating the moisture is constantly seen in the streets of cities. The lac is put into large pans, and these being placed in an inclined position, their contents are stirred for several hours with a large spatula.

NOTE 61. — The drying of lacquer is not effected by heat: a damp, cool atmosphere is essential. The object is usually enclosed in a wooden chest of which the sides and cover have been saturated with water.

NOTE 62. — Many collectors have been betrayed into purchasing, as genuine *tsui-shu*, specimens which are simply carved wood overlaid with red lacquer, in the manner of the *Kamakura-bori* mentioned in the text. Note must also be taken of imitation *tsui-shu*, of which the surface is a putty, — composed of lacquer, ochre, glue, and wheat-flour, — having a decorative design impressed on it. This kind of lacquer is largely applied to articles of wood or porcelain, such as trays, tobacco-boxes, vases, lecterns, etc.

INDEX

INDEX

Á JOUR, early use of chiselling, 74; bronze castings, 140; development of chiselling, 277–282.
Akao family, sword-decorators, 281.
Aki, Miyōchin, armourer, 263.
Alcove recess, decorative purpose of picture in, 3.
Alloys used in Japanese art, 232–236, 317; antimony ware, 318. *See also* Bronze.
Amida, seventh-century bronze statue of, 79.
Anami Kwōyetsu, lacquerer, 346, 360.
Anatomy, Japanese art attitude, 8, 33, 57, 200.
Anderson, William, on Chinese pictorial art, 24–26; on the Japanese Classical school, 39; on an ancient mural painting, 152.
Aoki family, sword-decorators, 269.
Applied art, Shōsō-in collection, 20, 87–89; first evidence, 72; shrines, 115; religious monopoly, 135; rise of secular, 135. *See also* Bronze, Enamel, Interior decoration, Iron, Lacquer, Metalwork, Sculpture, Sword-furniture.
Arakawa Reiun, wood-carver, 202.
Araki Kwampo, painter, 63.
Architecture, character of early Buddhist temples, 148. *See also* Interior decoration.
Ariyoshi *Nagato-nō-Sho*, mask-carver, 168.
Armour, beginning of decoration, 74, 205; Yoshitsune's, 205.

BELLS, ancient, 72, 99; tone, 99, 101; dimensions, 100; metal, 101; proportions, 102; form, 103; decoration, 103; method of hanging, 103.
Bells (*continued*):
Bowes, J. L., mistake on Japanese enamels, 331, 375.
Boya Magojiuro, mask-carver, 166.
Bronze, Japanese, introduction of casting, 70; use in weapons, 71; stone moulds, 71; early mirrors and bells, 72, 96; method of constructing early statues, 75; early temple ornaments and decorations, 78; statues of the seventh century, 79; introduction of the *cire-perdue* process of casting, 80; Nara Daibutsu, 85, 132–134; objects in the Shōsō-in collection, 88, 89; temple bells, 99–104; gongs, 104; Kamakura Daibutsu, 111, 114, 120; composition, 125; quality, 127; yellow, 128; process of casting, 129–134; Nagoshi family of art founders, 136–138; development of casting in Tokugawa epoch, 139–141; *tōrō* 140; manufacture of parlour bronzes, 141–144; modern castings, 144–147; Occidental influence, 147; relation of the sculptor and founder, 148. *See also* Fine Arts, Sculpture.
Bronze age in Japan, 70.
Brush, Japanese painting, 11.
Buddhism, influence on Japanese art, 17–19, 29, 75, 82, 106, 119–125; influence on Chinese art, 21; character of religious paintings, 30; religious zeal of emperors, 108; temples monopolise

INDEX

Buddhism (*continued*):
sculptures, 117; character of early temples, 148–150; ceremonial splendour, 149.
Buncho, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Bunrin, painter, 62.
Bunzo, mask-carver, 165.
Buto Gempachi, sword-decorator, 303.
Button for girdle-pendants. *See Netsuke.*

Caricatures, character of Japanese, 36.
Castings. *See* Bronze, Iron.
Chamberlain, B. H., on Japanese pictorial art, 15.
Champlevé, variety of enamel decoration, 327. *See also* Enamel.
Chiaroscuro. *See* Light and shade.
Chigusa, mask-carver, 166.
Chikanobu. *See* Izeki Jirozaemon.
Chikudo Ganki. *See* Ganki.
China, relation to Japanese art, 16–24, 37–40, 78, 367; prehistoric contact with Japan, 98; character of sculpture, 119.
Chiselling, varieties of chisels, 229; methods, 241–243, 247, 274. *See also* Metal-work, Sculpture, Sword-furniture.
Chiyo family, sword-decorators, 286
Chō Dense. *See* Meichō.
Choan, Kōami, lacquerer, 360.
Chobunsai, chromo-xylographer, 50
Chōen, sculptor, 110.
Chōhei, lacquerer, 363.
Chōho, Kōami, lacquerer, 361.
Chōkyu, Kōami, lacquerer, 361.
Chōsei, sculptor, 110.
Chōshiu province, school of sword-decorators, 279.
Chōshun, sculptor, 110.
Choun Yasuyoshi, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Chromo-xylography. *See* Wood.
Chuen, sculptor, 110.
Civilisation, Japanese, European attitude toward, 1; gradual influence of the Occident before the Revolution of 1867, 65; ancient, industrial rather than agricultural, 69; prehistoric contact with China and Korea, 98; art instinct, 177; attitude toward art and nature, 225–227.
Classical school of pictorial art, characteristics, 38–40; branches, 40. *See also* Kose school, Pictorial art.
Clay statues, technique, 84; famous, 86. *See also* Sculpture.
Cloisonné, variety of enamel decoration, 327. *See also* Enamel.
Colour in art, Chinese use, 22, 24; in religious pictures, 30; in decorations of the Kano school, 42; hand-coloured prints, 47; development of chromo-xylographs, 48–50; Japanese knowledge and use, 56, 160; in interior decorations, 159.
Conder, J., on character of Japanese decorative designs, 158.
Copper, use in sword-decorating, 236.
Costumes. *See Sage-mono.*

Daibutsu, Nara, 85, 132–134; Kamakura, 111, 114, 120.
Dansho, mask-carver, 166.
Deme family, mask-carvers, 166, 167.
Dengyō Daishi, artist-priest, 29, 109.
Deva Kings (Shi-Tennō), eighth-century clay statues of, 86; (Ni-ō) temple Kofuku-ji statues, 112 temple Todai-ji statues, 113.
Distemper, use in Japanese decoration, 152.
Dōchō, Kōami, lacquerer, 345.
Door, panel paintings, 3.
Dōsei, Kōami, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Dragon in Japanese art, 253.
Drama, popularity of the *No*, 162; use of masks, 163; influence on the theatre, 164.
Drawing. *See* Line.

Echi Yoshifune, mask-carver, 165.
Economic condition, ancient, 69.
Eishin, Hidari, decorative-sculptor, 161.
Eitoku, painter, 42.
Eiyen, sculptor, 116.
Enamel, as sword-decoration, 285; composition, 327; varieties, 327; introduction, 328, 329, 332; technique, 328, 376; former uses, 330–333, 375; modern development, 333–340; Japanese and Chinese, compared, 340.
Engraving. *See* Metal, Wood.
Ensei, sculptor, 110.
Enso, sculptor, 109.
Eshin, sculptor-priest, 109.

Fenollosa, E. F., on Japanese pictorial art, 15.
Feudalism, influence on Japanese art, 38, 111.
Fine arts, Japanese, genesis, 17–19, 193; influence of Buddhism, 29, 82, 106, 119–125; continuity of development, 70; character of artists, 156, 161, 318; instinct, 177; attitude toward the nude, 180; canons, 191, 203; conscientiousness, 208; Japanese attitude toward, 225–227, 229; effect of the Revolution of 1867 and a foreign market, 322–325. *See also* Bronze, Enamel, Interior decoration, Lacquer, Metal-work, Pictorial art, Sculpture, Sword-furniture.
Forgery in Japanese fine arts, 324.
Fresco painting not employed by Japanese, 152.
Fujii family, sword-decorators, 280.
Fukurai Masatomo, mask-carver, 166.
Fukushima Kagan, figure-sculptor, 200.
Fusayoshi, Miyōchin, armourer, 267.

Ganki, painter, 62.
Ganku, painter, 60.
Ganku, sculptor-priest, 110.
Gekkei, painter, 62.
Genjiro. *See* Jirozaemon Yoshimitsu.
Genkiu Mitsufusa, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Genkiu Mitsunaga, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Genkiu Mitsushige, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Genkiu Mitsuzane, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Genre painting, development, 44.
Genri Toshimitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Genri Yoshimitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Gensuke Hidemitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Gensuke Mitsukira, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Gilding, method, 370.
Girdle pendants. *See Sage-mono.*
Girls' fête, dolls, 194.
Gold, use in Japanese art, 74, 229–231; surfacing debased, 231, 371; method of gilding with, 370; process of refining, 371.
Golden Pavilion, decoration, 153, 369.
Gongs, origin, 104; varieties, 104; tone, 105.
Gonse, Louis, on Japanese pipe cases, 190; on motives in sword-decoration, 227; on Japanese lacquer, 360; on the Goto family, 373; misapprehensions on sword-decorators, 373.
Gorobei, sword-decorator, 287.
Goto family, sword-decorators, 212, 219–225, 298; skill and motives of early masters, 252–260, 373; art influence, 260, 261, 272; branches, 299.
Gowland, W., on quality of Japanese bronze, 127; on method of cast-

Gowland (*continued*):
ing bronze, 129–132; on Japanese alloys, 232, 235; on method of gilding, 370; on refining processes, 371; on "surfacing" metals, 371.
Graining of metals for art use, 245–247; origin, 262.
Greek art and Japanese art, 17–19, 78, 80, 119–122, 124, 368; and Chinese art, 21.
Guard, sword, 219; development of decoration, 250, 261–265, 277; materials, 265.
Gunkei, mask-carver, 166.
Guri-bori, variety of metal decoration, 247.
Gyogi, sculptor-priest, 81.

Hadagoro, lacquerer, 345, 360.
Hamano family, sword-decorators, 291, 303, 306, 375.
Hammering of metal, 312.
Han Kan, Chinese artist, 22.
Hanzan, lacquerer, 363.
Hanzo. *See* Hokan Mitsunao.
Hanzo Yasukore, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Hara Yōyusai, lacquerer, 362.
Haruaki, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Harukuni, Okamoto, sword-decorator, 294.
Harunari, Hirata, sword-decorator, 285, 308.
Harunobu, Suzuki, chromo-xylographer, 49, 50.
Haruwaka Tadatsugu, mask-carver, 166.
Haruyori. *See* Shunzui.
Hasegawa Kumazo, art-founder, 145, 147.
Hashi-ichi, sculptor, 191.
Hashimoto Gahō, painter, 63; western influence upon, 68.
Heian epoch, and the beginning of secular pictorial art, 27–29; character of sculpture in, 106–109.
Hibi Munetada, mask-carver, 165.
Hidekiyo, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Hidenori, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Hidetomo, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Hidetsugu, lacquerer, 345, 360.
Hideyori. *See* Shuzui.
Hideyori, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Hideyoshi, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Hideyoski, the Taikō, as an art patron, 135, 150, 162; Palace of Pleasure, 270.
Hien Wantsz, sculptor, 81.
Hikoshiro, Hirata, sword-decorator, 285.
Hirata family, sword-decorators and enamellers, 285, 300, 312, 332.
Hiroshige, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Hirotaka, painter, 31, 35.
Hiroyoshi, Kuwamura, sword-decorator, 272.
Hisayori. *See* Juzui, Kiuzui.
Hishigawa Moronobu, xylographer, 46.
Hōgen, art title, 117.
Hōin, art title, 110.
Hokan Mitsunao, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Hokke-do Trinity, famous group of dry lacquer statues, 86.
Hokkei, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Hokusai, art characteristics, 9, 10; chromo-xylographer, 50; traces of Western influence upon, 67.
Hōkyō, art title, 110.
Honjo Yoshitane, swordsmith and decorator, 309.
Horai Ujitoki, mask-carver, 166.
Horu-ji, temple, ancient distemper painting in, 152.
Hōshō family, *No* dancers, 162.
Hosono Masamori, inlayer, 273.
Hotokusai, art-founder, 144.

Hoyen, painter, 62.
Hōzan, mask-carver, 166.
Humour in Japanese sculpture, 85. *See also* Caricatures.

Ichibei, Nara, sword-decorator, 288.
Ichijo, Goto, sword-decorator, 298–301; specimens of his work, 307.
Ichikawa Hirosuke, alleged sword-decorator, 218.
Ideographa, influence on pictorial art, 8, 11, 31; helmet characters, 262.
Igarashi Dōho, lacquerer, 361.
Igarashi Shinsai, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Illustrations, freaks, 33; of the Tosa school, 34; development of wood engraving, 45–47; hand-coloured prints, 47; development of coloured prints, 48–51; technique of coloured prints, 51–55. *See also* Pictorial art.
Imaō Keinen, painter, 63.
Inaba-no-suke, title used by Yoshioka family, 283, 284.
Inchō, sculptor, 110.
Inchu, sculptor, 116.
Industry in ancient Japan, 69.
Injin, sculptor, 116.
Injo, sculptor, 110, 116.
Inkaku, sculptor, 110.
Inken, sculptor, 116.
Inkō, sculptor, 116.
Inku, sculptor, 116.
Inlaying, in sword-decoration, 220, 272; varieties, 243–245; inserted, 313; sepia, 315; ground-out, 315.
Inouye family, sword-decorators, 286.
Inro, girdle pendant, original and acquired use and fashion, 173; its cord-clutch, 173; decoration, 186.
Insertion in metal work, 313.
Inshu, sculptor, 116.
Inso, sculptor, 116.
Inson, sculptor, 110.
Interior decoration, decorative purpose of Japanese pictures, 3, 34, 42; growth of demand, 32, 42, 43; seventh-century temple, 78; early use of pictorial, 149, 151–153; development of sculptured, 150; pictorial, of the Golden and Silver Pavilions, 153; pictorial and sculptured, of Nishi Hongwan-ji, 154; pictorial and sculptured, of the Nikkō mausoleum, 155–157; general and particular aspects, 157; character of designs, 158; use of colours, 159; use of metal-carvings, 326.
Inyu, sculptor, 116.
Ippitsusai, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Iron, displaces bronze in swords, 71; ancient bell-shaped castings of unknown use, 73; first manufacture of vessels of, 136; tea-ceremonial urn and its influence, 136–138; in sword-decoration, 236; patina, 237. *See also* Bronze, Metal-work.
Iron age in Japan, 70.
Ishiguro family, sword-decorators, 301, 306.
Ishikawa Riuyemon Shigemasa, mask-carver, 165.
Isono family, metal-carvers and inlayers, 284.
Ito family, sword-decorators, 282, 296.
Ittan. *See* Sanehisa.
Ittosai, mask-carver, 165.
Iwamoto family, sword-decorators, 286, 293, 303, 306.
Iwasa Matahei, painter, 44.
Iyefusa, Miyōchin, armourer, 267.
Iyemasa, Nagoshi, art-founder, 138.
Iyetsugu, Jiyemon, art-founder, 141.
Iyeyasu, Shōgun, mausoleum, 154.
Izeki Jirozaemon, mask-carver, 168.
Izeki Kawachi Iyeshige, mask-carver, 168.
Izuka Tōyō, lacquerer, 362.

Jakushi. *See* Kizayemon.
Jikan Yoshimitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 166.
Jimpo, Nomura, sword-decorator, 287.
Jingo, Aoki, sword-decorator, 269.
Jingoro, Hidari, decorative-sculptor, 151, 156, 157.
Jirozaemon Mitzuteru, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Jirozaemon Norimitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Jirozaemon Yoshimitsu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Jitsuye, artist-priest, 29.
Jiunin, mask-carver, 166.
Jiyemon family, art-founders, 141.
Jōchiku, Isono, metal-carver, 284.
Jōchō, sculptor, 107, 110; record of his work, 168; titles, 109, 110.
Jōhō, art-founder, 138.
Joi, Nara, sword-decorator, 289; specimen of his work, 375.
Jokaku, sculptor, 111; his Deva Kings, 113.
Jōkasai, lacquerer, 363.
Jokei. *See* Gensuke Hidemitsu.
Jomi. *See* Sanshō.
Jōsei, art-founder, 138.
Josetsu, artist-priest, 37, 40.
Joshin. *See* Gensuke Hidemitsu.
Jōshin, Goto, sword-decorator, 220, 259.
Jotetsu, Isono, metal-carver, 285.
Jōun. *See* Oshima Katsujiro.
Jōyen, sculptor, 116.
Jōyu, Nagoshi, art-founder, 138.
Jubei, Aoki, sword-decorator, 269.
Jujō, Goto, sword-decorator, 223.
Juzui, Hamano, sword-decorator, 303.

Kacho, metal-carver, 326.
Kaga province as an art centre, 270.
Kaikei, sculptor, 116.
Kaji Tsunekichi, enameler, 333.
Kajikawa Kaijiro, lacquerer, 362.
Kakino *Moto-no-Otoma*, sculptor, 81.
Kakōsai, lacquerer, 363.
Kaku-no-bo, mask-carver, 166.
Kakujo, sculptor, 110.
Kakuyu, Minamoto no, caricaturist, 36.
Kamakura epoch. *See* Military epoch.
Kambayashi Rakkiken, figure-sculptor, 200.
Kame, art-founder, 142.
Kameyama Yasutomo, art-founder, 141.
Kamparu family, *No* dancers, 162.
Kan-Kan. *See* Han Kan.
Kanaoka, Kose no, painter, Chinese influence on, 16, 22; position, 28; style, 28; no surviving pictures, 28; and the Kose school, 34.
Kanashi, sculptor, 80.
Kanaya, metal-carver, 270.
Kanaya Gorosaburo, art-founder, 145.
Kanazawa as an art centre, 271.
Kaneiye, sword-decorator, 250, 266.
Kaneko family, sword-decorators, 286.
Kano Natsuo, sword-decorator, 309.
Kano school of pictorial art, branch of the Classical school, 40; development of the decorative method, 42. *See also* Pictorial art.
Kansai, chromo-xylographer, 51.
Kansai, Koma, lacquerer, 362.
Kansei, sculptor, 109.
Kanyen, sculptor, 116.
Kashiwaya Nagatsune, metal-carver, 295.
Kasuga Motomitsu, painter, alleged founder of the Yamato school, 32, 33.
Kasuga Tori, mask-carver, 166.
Kasuga school of pictorial art, 33. *See also* Pictorial art, Yamato school.
Kata-kiri style of incised chiselling, 274.
Katsugi Uji-iye, sword-decorator, 272.
Katsukawa Shunsho, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Katsukawa Shunyei, chromo-xylographer, 50.

INDEX

Katsumasa, Hidari, decorative-sculptor, 161.
Kawabata Gyokusho, painter, 63.
Kawanari, painter, traditional skill and originality, 27.
Kawanobe Itcho, lacquerer, 363.
Kawarabayashi Hidekuni, sword-decorator, 310.
Kazutomo, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Keibun, painter, 62.
Keibunkai, sculptor, 81.
Keibunkomi, sculptor, 81.
Keijo, sword-decorator, 224.
Keisai, art-founder, 143.
Kenjō, Goto, sword-decorator, 221, 222.
Kenyen, sculptor, 110.
Kichijo-in, mask-carver, 166.
Kijima Ippu, inlayer, 315.
Kikuchi Yosai, painter, 62.
Kikugawa Utamaro, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kimara, sculptor, 80.
Kimimaro, sculptor, founder of the Nara Daibutsu, 81.
Kimmochi, painter, 35.
Kinai family, sword-decorators, 280, 374.
Kinchaku, different uses, 169; method of wearing, 169. *See also Sagemono.*
Kinonaga, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kintada, painter, 35.
Kishiu, Miyōchin, armourer, 263.
Kitagawa Sōden, sword-decorator, 283.
Kitao Shigemasa, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kiuhaku, Koma, lacquerer, 361.
Kiui, Koma, lacquerer, 361.
Kiushiu. *See* Izeki Jirozaemon.
Kiuzui, Hamano, sword-decorator, 303.
Kiyohiro, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 48.
Kiyōji-tate, shape, use, and decoration, 192.
Kiyomasu, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 48.
Kiyomitsu, mask-carver, 165.
Kiyomitsu, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 48.
Kiyonaga, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kiyonari, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Kiyonobu, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 48.
Kiyōsai, chromo-xylographer, 51; on motion in art, 57; as a *genre* painter, 62.
Kiyoshige, Torii, chromo-xylographer, 48.
Kizan. *See* Jikan.
Kizayemon, sword-decorator, 290.
Kōami family, lacquerers, 345, 360, 361.
Kōben, sculptor, 113, 116; his Demon-lantern-bearers, 113.
Kōbō Daishi, artist-priest, 29, 109; no surviving pictures, 30; brings pictures from China, 367.
Kōchō, sculptor, 110.
Kodama Choyemon Yoshimitsu, mask-carver, 168.
Kodama Omi Mitsumasa, mask-carver, 168.
Kōgai, origin, 218; origin of decoration, 251. *See also* Sword-furniture.
Kogitsune, metal-carver, 282.
Kōgō, use and decoration, 192.
Koji, Yamagawa, sword-decorator, 309.
Kōjo, sculptor, 110.
Kōkei, sculptor, 113, 116.
Kōkitsu, sculptor, 116.
Kokō. *See* Hiroyoshi.
Koma family, lacquerers, 361, 362.
Ko-maro, sculptor, 109.
Kongō family, *No* dancers, 162.

Konju, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 303.
Konkwan, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 293.
Korea, influence on Japanese art, 16–19, 76; prehistoric contact with Japan, 98.
Koreo, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Koreshige, painter, 35.
Koreshige, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Koretsune, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Koreyoshi, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302; specimen of his work, 306.
Kōrin, painter, 62.
Kōrin, sculptor, 116.
Koriu-ji, temple, bronze statues of seventh century in, 79.
Koriusai, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kose no Kanaoka. *See* Kanaoka.
Kose school of pictorial art, Chinese style, 34; object of its work, 36. *See also* Pictorial Art.
Kōsei, sculptor, 116.
Kōshin, sculptor, 116.
Kōshō, Heian-epoch sculptor, 107, 110; titles, 109.
Kōshō, Military-epoch sculptor, 116.
Koshu, sculptor, 116.
Kōshun, sculptor, 116.
Kōson, sculptor, 116.
Kōtan, sculptor, 116.
Kōun, Heian-epoch sculptor-priest, 109.
Kōun, Military-epoch sculptor-priest, 116.
Kōun, Takamura, sculptor, 201; school, 201.
Koushi, mask-carver, 165.
Kōyei, sculptor, 116.
Kōyō, sculptor, 116.
Kōyu, sculptor, 116.
Kozuka, origin of wearing, 218; origin of decoration, 251. *See also* Sword-furniture.
Kubo Shunman, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Kukai. *See* Kōbō Daishi.
Kumagaye Naohiko, painter, 63.
Kuninaga, sword-decorator, 272, 374.
Kusakari Kiyosada, inlayer, 296.
Kuwamura family, sword-decorators, 271.
Kwaikei, sculptor, 111; his Deva Kings, 113.
Kwanjo, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 203.
Kwannon, goddess of mercy, Shotoku's statue, 77; wooden statue in temple Hokke-ji, 87.
Kwanri, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 303.
Kwanze family, *No* dancers, 162.
Kwōjō, Goto, sword-decorator, 221, 222; style, 259.
Kyōtō, capital of Japan, influence on art development, 32.

Lacquer, statues, 84, 86; qualities, 341; introduction, 342; development and use, 343–345, 346, 349; early master lacquerers, 345; modern conditions, 349; technique, 349–354, 377; decoration, 354–358; special varieties, 358–360.
Lapidary work, ancient Japanese, 92.
Leather used in girdle-pendants, 170.
Light and shade, in Japanese pictures, 5, 15, 30, 59; in Chinese pictures, 22, 25.
Line, in Japanese art, influence of ideographs, 8; styles of touch, 9; influence of artist's position while painting, 12; precedence, 12, 57, 58, 229; in Chinese art, 22; in religious pictures, 30; in caricatures, 36; development in incised chiselling, 274.

Makunosuke. *See* Choun.
Mambi. *See* Tosui.

INDEX

Manku. *See* Tosui.
Mannerisms and copying in Japanese pictures, 13.
Mansho. *See* Kodama Omi.
Manual dexterity of Japanese artists, 9–11.
Manyei. *See* Genkiu Mitsunaga.
Maruyama Okio, painter, founder of the Shi-jo school, 59, 60.
Masachika, Nara, sword-decorator, 289.
Masaharu, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Masahiro, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Masakiyo, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Masamine, Kōami, lacquerer, 361.
Masamitsu. *See* Yeijo.
Masamune no *Busshi*, sculptor, 109.
Masanaga, Nara, sword-decorator, 288, 289.
Masanobu, painter, founder of the Kano school, 40.
Masanobu, Nara, sword-decorator, 290.
Masatsugu. *See* Kenjō.
Masatsune, art-founder, 143.
Masatsune, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 301.
Masatsune, Ito, sword-decorator, 282.
Masayori, Hamano, sword-decorator, 291.
Masayoshi, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Masks, use in the *No* dance, 163; as works of art, 165; celebrated carvers, 165–168.
Masu-ya, artists called, 375.
Matabei, Muneta, sword-decorator, 268.
Mataemon, wood-carver, 150.
Matazayemon, Muneta, sword-decorator, 268.
Matsumoto Kisaburo, figure-sculptor, 200.
Mayeda Toshiiye, chief of Kaga, career, 270; art patron, 271.
Maze-gane, process in metal work, 314.
Medicine box. *See Inro.*
Meichō, painter, 31.
Meishin. *See* Shigeyoshi (Meishin).
Menesuke, Miyōchin, armourer, 262.
Menuki, sword-mount, origin of decoration, 217, 251. *See also* Sword-furniture.
Metal work, early development of decoration, 74, 78; in the Shōsō-in collection, 87–89; inlaying, 243–245, 272; graining, 245–247; hammering, 312; insertion, 313; inserted inlaying, 313; *maze-gane*, 314; *shibuichi-doshi*, 314; sepia-inlaying, 315; ground-out inlaying, 315; in architectural decoration, 326. *See also* Alloys, Bronze, Gold, Iron, Sword-furniture.
Michitaka, *Sok en Kishō* on sword-decoration, 212–225.
Military epoch, virile character of sculpture, 110; specimens of religious sculpture, 111–114.
Ming dynasty, China, character of pictorial art, 43.
Minjo, sword-decorator, 310.
Minkoku, sword-decorator, 310.
Miroku, mask-carver, 165.
Mirrors, ancient, 72, 96, 368; magical, 98; antiquity, 368.
Mitsuiye. *See* Kwōjō.
Mitsumasa. *See* Jujō, Teijō.
Mitsumori. *See* Keijō.
Mitsune Nakai, sword-decorator, 279.
Mitsushige. *See* Sojukō.
Mitsutaka. *See* Yenjō.
Mitsutoshi. *See* Tsujō.
Mitsutsugu. *See* Tokujō.
Miyano, mask-carver, 166.
Miyata Chikugo, mask-carver, 168.
Miyōchin family, armourers, 262, 267.

Miyoju. *See* Shigeyoshi (Miyoju).
Mizunō family, sword-decorators, 272.
Mogarashi. *See* Kitagawa.
Mokunosuke. *See* Tosui Mitsunori.
Money-pouch. *See Kinchaku.*
Monjushiri, thirteenth-century statue of, 113.
Mori Sosen, painter, 61.
Moriyoshi, Kuwamura, sword-decorator, 271.
Morotsugu. *See* Shigehiro.
Motochska, sword-decorator, 310.
Motomichi, sword-decorator, 310.
Motonari, sword-decorator, 310.
Motonobu, painter, founder of the Kano school, 40.
Muneta family, sword-decorators, 268.
Muneyuki, Umetada, sword-decorator, 282.
Myojun, sculptor-priest, 110.

Nagafusa, Kōami, lacquerer, 361.
Nagasaki as an art centre, 290.
Nagashige, Kōami, lacquerer, 361.
Nagata Tomoharu, lacquerer, 362.
Nagatsune, Yasui, metal-carver, 286.
Nagayoshi family, sword-decorators, 272.
Nagoshi family, art-founders, 136, 138.
Naka Mitsuyuki, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Nakai family, sword-decorators, 279.
Nakayama, Kōmin, lacquerer, 362.
Nakayama Shōyeki, art-founder, 142.
Namikawa Sosuke, head of a school of enamelers, 336, 376.
Namikawa Yasuyuki, enameler, 336, 376.
Naomichi, Muneta, sword-decorator, 269.
Naomine, Muneta, sword-decorator, 269.
Naoshige, Muneta, sword-decorator, 269.
Naoshige, Okamoto, sword-decorator, 374.
Nara, capital of Japan, art objects, 19; condition of pictorial art in Nara epoch, 26; civilisation, 81; aspect of the city, 83.
Nara *Busshi*, 109.
Nara family, sword-decorators, 276, 289, 305.
Nara ningyo, and the *netsuke*, 175; form, 97, 199; history, 197–199, 369, 370.
Nature, Japanese attitude toward, 226.
Nen Kawo and the Chinese renaissance in Japanese art, 37.
Netsuke, origin, 174–176; decoration, 176; designs in decoration, 177–185, 191; material, 177; criterion of value, 181–183, 196; form, 185; uniqueness, 193; sculptors, 193, 195–197.
Nikkō, mask-carver, 165.
Nikkō mausoleum, interior decoration, 154, 159.
Ninomiya Tōtei, lacquerer, 362.
Nishi Hongwan-ji, temple, interior decoration, 154.
Nobuiye, Miyōchin, armourer, sword-guards, 263.
Nobunaga as an art patron, 150, 162.
Nobushige, painter, 35.
Nobutsune Nakai, sword-decorator, 279.
Nobuzane, painter, characteristics, 10.
Nogami Yataro, art-founder, 145.
Nomura Bunkyo, painter, 63.
Nomura family, sword-decorators, 286, 287.
Nude in art, Japanese attitude toward, 7, 125, 178, 180; Chinese attitude toward, 180.

Oda Noaki, sword-decorator, 310.
Ogata Gekko, chromo-xylographer, 51, 63.
Ogata Kwōrin, lacquerer, 346, 361.
Ogawa Ritsuō, lacquerer, 348, 362.

Ogawa Shōmin, lacquerer, 362.
Ohori Masatoshi, hammerer of metal, 312.
O-i. *See* Wong Wei.
Ojime, fashion, 173.
Okamoto family of Hagi, metal-carvers, 279, 374.
Okamoto family of Kyōtō, sword-decorators, 294, 374.
Okamura Masanobu, xylographer, 46, 48.
Okano Hohaku, figure-sculptor, 199.
Okano Kijiro, sword-decorator, 310.
Okazaki Sessei, art-founder, 145.
Omori family, sword-decorators, 292, 303, 306.
Omiva Yamato Bokunyu, mask-carver, 168.
Ono. *See* Jikan.
Ono Goroyemon, sculptor and founder of the Kamakura Daibutsu, 111.
Ooka Shunboku, xylographer, 46.
Oshima Katsujiro, art-founder, 144.
Oshima Yasutaro, art-founder, 144.
Ouishi, art-founder, 138.

Patina, of bronze, 126, 127, 372; of Japanese alloys, 233, 235; of copper, 236, 372; of iron, 237; of pewter, 317.
Perspective, in Japanese pictures, 4, 15, 58; in Chinese pictures, 22, 25.
Pewter, composition, 317; use, 317; patina, 317.
Pictorial art, Japanese, character, 2; decorative purpose, 3, 6; effect of purpose on characteristics, 4, 32; impressionistic, 5; motion, 6; exclusion of the nude, 7; ignorance of anatomy, 8; influence of ideographs, 8, 11, 31; styles of touch, 9; manual dexterity, 9–11; materials, 11; position of the artist while painting, 12; mannerisms, 13; multiplication of copies, 13; effect on criticism of inaccessibility of originals, 14; character of religious paintings, 15, 23, 30; relation to Chinese, 16, 21–24, 26, 37–40; influence of Buddhism, 17, 29; beginning of secular, 27–29; continued precedence of religious, 29, 30; technique of religious and secular, 31; first native school of secular, 31; Yamato school, 32, 33; Tosa school, 34; Kose or Classical school, 34; Takuma school, 35; objects of the work of these schools, 36; caricatures, 36; renaissance of Chinese influence, 37–41; periods in development, 41; development of the decorative mode, 42; reaction against the Classical school, 43; *genre* painting and the Popular school, 44; development of woodcuts and coloured prints, 45–51; analysis of the work of the Popular school, 55–59; branches of the Popular school, 59–62; present conditions, 62–64; effect of Western ideas, 64–68; in architectural decoration, 151–155, 158; ancient distemper painting, 152; no frescos, 152; no portraits, 368. *See also* Fine arts.
Picture-galleries, why none in Japan, 4, 14.
Popular school of pictorial art, development of *genre*, 44; development of xylography, 45–51; Occidental popularity, 55; use of colour, 56; drawing, 57–59; absence of texture painting, 58. *See also* Pictorial art.
Portraits, statue, 115; no pictorial, 368.
Puppets of Nara. *See Nara ningyo.*

Raijo, sculptor, 110.
Refining metals, Japanese process, 371.

Rein, J. J., on patina, 372.
Relief, early designs in, 72; in bronze castings, 140; origin and development in metal-carving, 220, 249, 261; varieties in metal carving, 241; in lacquer, 344.
Religious paintings, Japanese, 15, 23, 29, 30; technique, 31. *See also* Buddhism.
Renjō, Goto, sword-decorator, 223.
Repoussé, process in early statutes, 75; in sword-decoration, 220. *See also* Relief.
Ri-fu-ho, traditional carver, 193.
Rihei, Yamamoto, lacquerer, 362.
Riuki. *See* Nogami.
Riumin, sword-decorator, 310.
Riyoyei, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 303.
Rōben, artist-priest, 86.
Rwaiken, sculptor, 116.
Ryōkin, wood-carver, 46.

Sadahisa, sword-decorator, 310.
Sage-mono, money-pouch, 169–171; tobacco outfit, 171, 187–191; medicine-box, 173, 186; origin of the *netsuke*, 174–176; its decoration, 176–186; *en suite* designs, 191.
Saicho. *See* Dengyō Daishi.
Sairen, mask-carver, 166.
Sanehisa, Nagoshi, art-founder, 138.
Sanko, mask-carver, 165.
Sanraku, painter, 42.
Sansei-sha, firm of art-founders, 144.
Sanshō, Nagoshi, art-founder, 138.
Screen painting, 3.
Sculpture, Japanese, question of foreign influence, 19, 76, 78, 89, 193; superiority, 20; primitive conditions, 75; first sculptors, 76; wooden images by Tori and Shotoku, 77; bronze statues of seventh century, 79, 80; sculptors of the seventh century, 80; early culmination in Nara epoch, 80, 83, 85–89; influence of Buddhism, 82, 83, 106, 117–125; clay and dry-lacquer statues, 84; stone statues, 90–96; character of Heian epoch, 106–109; sculptors of the Heian epoch, 109; character of Military epoch, 110–115; portrait, 114, 115; sculptors of the Military epoch, 116; narrow range of motives, 123; the nude ignored, 125, 180; relation of the sculptor and bronze-caster, 148; development of wood-carving in interior decorations, 149–151, 154–161; mask carving and carvers, 164–168; of the *netsuke*, 176–186, 193; of the *inro*, 186; of the pipe-case, 190; origin of *netsuke* carving, 193–196; figure, 197–200; modern realism, 200; modern Kōun school of wood-carvers, 201–203; skill and demand in modern wood-carving, 203; Japanese knowledge of lights in, 315; training of sculptors, 319–321; source of designs, 321. *See also* Bronze, Fine arts, Sword-furniture.
Seiami, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Seichō, sculptor, 110.
Seigai Kanshichi, lacquerer, 362.
Seimin, art-founder, 142.
Senshiu Yoriyoshi, mask-carver, 168.
Senshu Yashamaru, mask-carver, 168.
Senyen, sculptor, 116.
Sesshiu, painter, 40.
Seventh Avenue academy of sculptors, 110; in Military epoch, 116. *See also* Sculpture.
Shadows. *See* Light and shade.
Shakudo alloy, composition, 232, 233; antiquity, 232; properties, 233.
Shakuzuru, mask-carver, 165.
Shiba Tachito, sculptor, 76; builds temples, 76.

Shiba Tasu-na, sculptor, 76.
Shiba Tori. *See* Tori Busshi.
Shibara Ichidayu, lacquerer, 361.
Shibata Zeshin, lacquerer, 349, 362.
Shibayama Doshō, lacquerer, 357, 363.
Shibuichi, composition, 234; properties, 235; antiquity, 235.
Shibuichi-doshi, process in metal-work, 314.
Shichirozayemon, founder, 136.
Shigehiro, Yoshioka, metal-carver, 283, 284.
Shigemitsu, Omori, sword-decorator, 292.
Shigetsugu, Yoshioka, metal-carver, 283, 284.
Shigeyoshi, Umetada, sword-decorator, 267.
Shigeyoshi (Meishin), Umetada, sword-decorator, 268.
Shigeyoshi (Miyōju), Umetada, sword-decorator, 267.
Shi-jo school of pictorial art, 59. *See also* Pictorial art.
Shikongō, clay statue of, in temple Todai-ji, 86.
Shimizu Rinkei, mask-carver, 166.
Shinkai Takejiro, wood-carver, 202.
Shirayama Shōya, lacquerer, 363.
Shishō Daishi, sculptor-priest, 109.
Shitan wood, properties and use, 369.
Shōami Masanari, lacquerer, 362.
Shōami Masanobu, inlayer, 273.
Shōami Nagatsugu, inlayer, 273.
Shōbei, Yamamoto, lacquerer, 361.
Shōga Shiubun, painter, 37, 40.
Shōkaku. *See* Oshima Katsujiro.
Shōko, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 303.
Shōkwasai, lacquerer, 363.
Shōsō-in collection of objects of applied art, 19, 87–89.
Shotoku, Prince, character, 77; as a sculptor, 77.
Shōun, decorative-sculptor, 161.
Shōun, mask-carver, 166.
Shōyemon, Nomura, sword-decorator, 287.
Shōzui. *See* Masayori.
Shuncho, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Shunkei, sculptor-priest, 116.
Shunshō, Yamamoto, lacquerer, 361.
Shunzui, Hamano, sword-decorator, 303.
Shuraku, sword-decorator, 310.
Shuzan. *See* Tosa Mitsuoki.
Shuzui, Hamano, sword-decorator, 303.
Silver, use in Japanese art, 231; surfacing debased, 231, 372.
Silver Pavilion, decoration, 153.
Soami Hisatsugu, mask-carver, 166.
Soami family, sword-decorators, 269.
Sohaku, Kōami, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Sōjō, Goto, sword-decorator, 220, 222.
Sōju. *See* Shigetsugu.
Sojukō, Goto, sword-decorator, 222.
Sokei, Kōami, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Sōkō, Hirata, hammerer of metal, 312.
Somin, art-founder, 143.
Sōmin, Yokōya, sword-decorator, 274–276.
Sōtoku. *See* Shigehiro.
Sōyo, Yokoya, sword-decorator, 274.
Sozen, Kōami, lacquerer, 345, 361.
Statues. *See* Bronze, Sculpture.
Stone statues, mediocre, 90, 93; unsatisfactory material, 91, 96; Japanese skill, 92; ancient monument, 92; buried effigies, 93; images, 94–96.
Suggestion in Japanese pictures, 5; in Chinese pictures, 23.
Sukezaemon. *See* Jikan Yoshimitsu, Yukan Mitsuyasu.
Sumptuary laws on chromo-xylographs, 51.
Sung dynasty, China, character of its pictorial art, 22.
Surfacing debased metals, 231, 371.
Suwara Yasugoro, art-founder, 144.

Suzuki Harunobu. *See* Harunobu.
Suzuki Gensuke, hammerer of metals, 312; originates process of insertion, 313.
Suzuki Chōkichi, art-founder, 145.
Suzuki Kichigoro, invents antimony ware, 318.
Suzuki Kinyemon, sword-decorator, 303.
Sword-furniture, Japanese, early decoration, 74; skill in decorating, 207; character of decoration, 208; articles, 210, 211, 217–219, 250, 251; Japanese commentary on decoration, 212–225; Goto family of decorators, 212, 219–225, 252–261; identification of decorators, 212, 213, 219; styles of metal ground, 213, 238–241; grades of decorators, 214; high ideals of master carvers, 215, 216; antiquity of decoration, 217; technical skill and motives in decoration, 227–229, 252–260, 288; chisels used, 229; metals employed, 230, 232, 236; methods of chiselling, 241–243, 247, 274; inlaying, 243–245, 272; graining, 245–247; beginning of relief carving, 249; early field of decoration, 250–252; development of guard decoration, 261–265; decoration in the sixteenth century, 266–270; decoration in the seventeenth century, 270–286; enamel decoration, 285, 332; decoration in the eighteenth century, 286–296; decoration in the nineteenth century 296–303, 308–311; termination of production, 297; social influence on decoration, 304–306; specimens of nineteenth-century work, 306–308; guild, 310. *See also* Metal-work.
Swords, bronze, 71; iron, 72; varieties, 209; disappearance of *samurai*, 297. *See also* Sword-furniture.
Symmetry, axiom of, in art, 20.
Tachibana no Morikumi, xylographer, 46.
Taiami, lacquerer, 345, 360.
Takaichi Makuni, sculptor, 81.
Takaichi Mamaro, sculptor, 81.
Takamura Kōun, sculptor, 201; school, 201.
Takao-maro, sculptor, 109.
Takashima Takakane, painter, 34.
Takatsune, Soami, sword-decorator, 269.
Takayoshi, Miyōchin, armourer, 263.
Taki Katei, painter, 63.
Takioka family, puppet-makers, 370.
Takuma Tamenari, painter, school, 35; religious pictures, 35.
Takuma school of pictorial art, 35. *See also* Pictorial art.
Takusai, art-founder, 144.
Tamakaji Zokoku, lacquerer, 362.
Tancho, decorative-sculptor, 161.
Tang dynasty, China, character of its pictorial art, 22.
Tankai Rishi, mask-carver, 166.
Tari-maro, sculptor, 109.
Taroyemon. *See* Naka.
Tatsuki Chōbei, lacquerer, 361.
Tea-ceremonial, Hideyoshi's influence, 136; urns, 136.
Teijō, art-founder, 143.
Teijō, Goto, sword-decorator, 222.
Temmin, sword-decorator, 310.
Tenaka Kiyohisa, sword-decorator, 310.
Teruhide, Omori, sword-decorator, 292.
Terumasa, Omori, sword-decorator, 292.
Terumoto, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Tetsugen. *See* Naoshige (Okamoto.)
Texture not shown in Japanese pictures, 59.
Theatre, influence of the *No* dance, 164.
Third Avenue academy of sculptors,

Third Avenue academy (*continued*): 110; in Military epoch, 116. *See also* Sculpture.
Toba Sojō. *See* Kakuyu.
Tobacco, introduction, 171; clubs, 171; early pipes, 172; modern fashion in outfit, 172, 187–191; *en suite* decoration of outfit, 191. *See also Sage-mono.*
Tohaku Mitsutaka, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Tokei, sculptor, 116.
Tokugawa epoch, influence on art, 43, 139, 270.
Tokujō, Goto, sword-decorator, 221.
Tokuwaka Tadamasa, mask-carver, 165.
Tomi Yeisuke, art-founder, 145.
Tomochika, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Tomoharu, Okamoto, sword-decorator, 279.
Tomotsugu, Okamoto, sword-decorator, 279.
Tomotsune, Nakai, sword-decorator, 279.
Tomotsune, Omori, sword-decorator, 303.
Tomoyuki, Nakai, sword-decorator, 279.
Tori Busshi, sculptor, skill, 76, 77; wooden statues, 77.
Torii family, chromo-xylographers, 48, 50.
Toriusai. *See* Okano Kijiro.
Tōrō, development of casting, 140.
Tosa Mitsuoki, *netsuke* carver, 195.
Tosa school of pictorial art, 34–36. *See also* Pictorial art.
Toshiharu, Nara, sword-decorator, 276.
Toshihisa, Nara, sword-decorator, 276, 374.
Toshinaga, Nara, sword-decorator, 277.
Toshiteru, Nara, sword-decorator, 276.
Tosui Mitsunori, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Tōun, art-founder, 143.
Toun Yasutaka, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Toyoda Kokō, metal-worker, achievements, 313, 314.
Toyoharu, Utagawa, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Toyokuni, Utagawa, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Toyonobu, Utagawa, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Tsuji family, sword-decorators, 285.
Tsujō, Goto, sword-decorator, 222, 223.
Tuke, S., on the chromo-xylograph process, 52–55.

Uchino Harutoshi, sword-decorator, 309.
Umetada family, swordsmiths and decorators, 267, 282.
Unga, sculptor, 116.
Unkei, sculptor, 111; his Deva Kings, 113; his Watch Dogs, 113.
Unshō, sculptor, 116.
Untaro. *See* Toun Yasutaka.
Utagawa family, chromo-xylographers, 50.
Uwo Hyoye, mask-carver, 166.
Uyematsu Hōmin, lacquerer, 363.
Uyemura family, sword-decorators, 286.

Wakabayashi family, sword-decorators, 286.
Watanabe Hisamitsu, sword-decorator, specimen of his work, 308.
Watanabe Kwazan, secretly studies Occidental methods, 66; ordered to commit suicide, 66; commemoration, 66; Western influence on his paintings, 67.
Watanabe Seitei, painter, 51, 63; influence of Western methods on, 68.

INDEX

Weapons, bronze, 71. *See also* Sword.
Wong Wei, Chinese painter, 22.
Wood, development of wood-engraving, 45–47, 367; development of chromo-xylographs, 48–51; technique of chromo-xylographs, 51–55; early wooden statues, 76–78; Nara-epoch statue, 87; Heian-epoch statues, 108; the Deva Kings, 112; favourite material for statues, 117; carving in interior decoration, 150, 154–158; carved masks, 163, 165; *netsuke* carvings, 177; puppets, 194, 197–200; modern carving, 200–204.
Wu Tao-tsz, Chinese painter, 22.

XYLOGRAPHY. *See* Wood.

YAKUSHI, sculptor, 80.
Yakushi, seventh-century bronze statue of, 79.
Yamagawa Koji. *See* Koji.
Yamamoto Fukumatsu, figure-sculptor, 201.
Yamamoto family, lacquerers, 361, 362.
Yamato Mamori, mask-carver, 168.
Yamato school of pictorial art, 32, 34–36. *See also* Pictorial art.
Yasha, mask-carver, 165.
Yashichiro, Nagoshi, founder, invents tea-ceremonial urn, 136; honours, 137.
Yasuchicka, Nara, sword-decorator, 276.
Yasuchika Shinsuke, sword-decorator, 303.
Yasui family, sword-decorators, 286.
Yasuiye, Jiyemon, art-founder, 141.
Yasuteru, Jiyemon, art-founder, 141.
Yechizen. *See* Toshiharu.
Yeijiro. *See* Ichijo.
Yeijō, Goto, sword-decorator, 221.
Yeishi, chromo-xylographer, 50.
Yeishi, Iwamoto, sword-decorator, 303.
Yenchin, artist-priest, 29.
Yenjō, Goto, sword-decorator, 224.
Yoji Hidetsugu, lacquerer, 361.
Yōjuro. *See* Nakayama Shōyeki.
Yokoya family, sword-decorators, 274, 305.
Yoneharu Unkai, sculptor, 202.
Yosei, lacquerer, 363.
Yoshimichi, Miyōchin, armourer, 263.
Yoshinari, mask-carver, 165.
Yoshinorī, Mizuno, sword-decorator, 272.
Yoshioka Tadatsuga, sword-decorator, 310.
Yoshisato, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Yoshishige, sword-decorator, 272, 374.
Yoshitsugu, Akao, sword-decorator, 281.
Yoshitsune, Ishiguro, sword-decorator, 302.
Yoshitsune, Minamoto, his armour, 205.
Yujō, Goto, sword-decorator, 217, 218, 220, 222; and relief carving, 249; field, 250, 251; skill, 252; specimens of his work, 255, 256, 258.
Yukan Mitsuyasu, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Yusai Yasuhisa, Deme, mask-carver, 167.
Yuzayemon, wood-carver, 150.

ZENRIUSAI GIDO. *See* Suwara.
Zenshō, Nagoshi, art-founder, 138.
Zuiyetsu. *See* Iyemasa.